

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUNNA AND ḤADĪTH

AND

THEIR EARLY DOCUMENTATION

by

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TO MY MOTHER



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
SUMMARY.....	xiii
INTRODUCTION.....	1

### PART 1 - THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUNNA AND HADĪTH

Chapter I	THE SEMANTICS OF SUNNA.....	6
	1. <u>Etymological signifance of sunna.</u>	6
	2. <u>Meaning of sunna.</u>	11
	(i) Practice in general.	11
	(ii) Customary laws.	13
	(iii) Innovation.	18
	3. <u>Kinds of sunna.</u>	23
	(i) Sunna of the tribe.	25
	(ii) Sunna of Allāh.	27
	(iii) Sunna of Muḥammad.	32
	(iv) Regional Sunna.	43
	(v) Sunna of the Community - Islamic Sunna	49
	(vi) Juristic Sunna - Sunna in Islamic Jurisprudence.	57
Chapter II	THE SEMANTICS OF HADĪTH.....	59
	1. <u>Literal meaning of hadīth.</u>	59
	(i) 'New' or 'recent'.	59
	(ii) 'Discourse' or 'narrative'.	69
	2. <u>Technical meaning of hadīth.</u>	76
	3. <u>Hadīth - Sunna relationship.</u>	85
	4. <u>Concept of 'Ilm in relation to hadīth.</u>	93
	(i) Knowledge in general.	93
	(ii) Historical knowledge.	94
	(iii) Theological and legal knowledge.	95
	(iv) 'Ilm, meaning hadīth.	98
	5. <u>Athar and hadīth.</u>	105
	6. <u>Hikma and hadīth.</u>	109
	7. <u>Fiqh and hadīth.</u>	111
	8. <u>Other related terms for hadīth.</u>	117
	(i) <u>Khabar.</u>	118
	(ii) <u>Ra'y.</u>	120
	(iii) <u>Mathal.</u>	127

Chapter III	THE TRADITION OF WRITING HADĪTH.....	129
1.	<u>Introduction.</u>	129
2.	<u>Position of Arabic writing at the advent of Islam.</u>	131
3.	<u>Written records of pre-Islamic Arabia.</u>	135
	(i) <u>Sahifa, Majalla and Rawāsīm.</u>	135
	(ii) Religious texts.	138
	(a) Torah and Bible.	138
	(b) Book of Daniel.	139
	(c) Book of Enoch.	141
	(iii) Writings of <u>Hanīfs</u> and Sabians.	141
4.	<u>Other proofs of writing in pre-Islamic Arabia.</u>	142
	(i) <u>Midrās.</u>	142
	(ii) <u>Muhammad's scribes.</u>	143
	(iii) <u>Women writers.</u>	144
	(iv) <u>Teaching of the art of writing.</u>	145
	(v) <u>Kamil.</u>	145
	(vi) <u>Pacts and tribal agreements.</u>	146
	(vii) <u>Inscriptions.</u>	147
	(viii) <u>Poetry, War-like deeds and tribal</u> <u>genealogies.</u>	148
	(ix) <u>Personal letters.</u>	149
	(x) <u>Occasional recordings.</u>	149
5.	<u>Position of writing after Islam.</u>	153
6.	<u>Writing and Memory.</u>	159
	(i) <u>Writing - Memory Controversy.</u>	165
	(ii) <u>Advocates and opponents of hadīth writing.</u>	173
	(iii) <u>Origin of writing - memory controversy.</u>	178
7.	<u>Pro-hadīth and Anti-hadīth hadīth.</u>	180
	(i) <u>Sample examples.</u>	180
	(ii) <u>Harmonisation.</u>	182
	(a) <u>Ban not permanent -</u> <u>Theory of abrogation.</u>	
	(b) <u>Ban for certain category of people only.</u>	
	(c) <u>Ban on official registration.</u>	
	(d) <u>Ban on recording the Qur'ān</u> <u>and hadīth on the same sheet.</u>	
	(iii) <u>Purpose of interdiction.</u>	186
	(a) <u>To preserve the purity</u> <u>of the Qur'ānic text.</u>	
	(b) <u>Not to compete with the Qur'ān.</u>	
	(c) <u>Not to distract people from</u> <u>the Qur'ān.</u>	
8.	<u>Authenticity of prohibitory traditions.</u>	189
9.	<u>Reasons for aversion to writing hadīth.</u>	192

Chapter IV	THE THEORY OF LATE RECORDING OF ḤADĪTH.....	201
1.	<u>Bases of the theory.</u>	201
	(i) Prophet's prohibitory <u>aḥādīth</u> .	201
	(ii) Destruction of written records.	202
	(iii) Misinterpretation of certain terms and statements.	208
	(a) <u>Saḥīfa</u> and <u>Mushaf</u>	208
	(b) <u>Tahdīth</u> , <u>Tadwīn</u> , <u>Jam'</u> and <u>Riwāya</u> etc.	228
	(i) <u>Tahdīth</u> and its derivatives.	229
	(ii) <u>Jam'</u> and <u>Riwāya</u> .	234
	(iii) <u>Akhbararā'An</u> and other terms.	236
	(iv) <u>Dhakara</u> and <u>Qāla</u> .	238
	(v) <u>Tadwīn</u> and <u>Tasnīf</u> .	239
	(vi) Statements of and about traditionists.	243
	(iv) Biased view about the <u>Jāhiliyya</u> period and the Umayyad dynasty.	247
2.	<u>Writing of ḥadīth in early Islam.</u>	250
	(i) Writing to memorise.	252
	(ii) Juristic and religious motive.	252
	(iii) To know the life history of the Prophet.	253
	(iv) Incidental quotations in correspondence.	254
	(v) Recording for private use - stray <u>aḥādīth</u> .	257
	(vi) Prophet's own written material.	258
	(vii) Incidental recording by ḥadīth students.	258
	(viii) Deliberate recording for posterity - large collections.	260
3.	<u>Conclusions.</u>	260
Chapter V	THE EARLY RECORDS.....	261
1.	<u>Introductory-Receptacles of ḥadīth.</u>	261
	(i) <u>Kitāb</u> and <u>Saḥīfa</u> .	268
	(ii) <u>Nuskha</u> .	280
	(iii) <u>Daftar</u> .	284
	(iv) <u>Qirtās</u> and <u>Tūmār</u> .	289
	(v) <u>Juz'</u> .	296
	(vi) <u>Kurrāsa</u> .	302
	(vii) Other terms for receptacles of ḥadīth.	305
2.	<u>Actual Records.</u>	307
	(i) Official recording during the Prophet's time.	311
	(a) Legal and financial matters.	311
	(i) <u>Kitāb as-sadaqa</u> .	311
	(ii) Rules of <u>zakāt</u> and other legal matters in the form of letters.	312
	(b) Political and administrative matters.	316
	(i) Treaties, pacts and agreements.	316
	(ii) Charters, amnesties and grants of land.	322

	Page
(iii) Instruction to civil servants.	332
(iv) Letters to the tribes and tribal chiefs.	334
(v) Letters to the rulers of neighbouring countries.	337
(vi) Census.	341
(vii) War records.	342
(viii) List of emissaries.	343
(c) Commercial and other transactions.	343
(d) Sermons and stray <u>ahādīth</u> .	345
(ii) Unofficial recordings.	346
(a) <u>Sahifa</u> , <u>Muskha</u> , etc. of the Companions. and the successors.	349
(b) Other written records of the Companions.	420
(c) Other written records of the Successors and early scholars.	455

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	499
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Abjad: Hasan Siddiq Khān, Abjad al-'Ulūm.
- Adab: Sūlī, Adab al-Kuttāb.
- Adwa': Abū Rayya, Adwā' 'Ala 's-sunnat al-Muhammadiyya.
- Agh: Abū 'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, Kitāb al-Aghānī (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya).
- Agh (Bulāq): Abū 'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, Kitāb al-Aghānī (Bulāq).
- Agh (Rudolph): Rudolph (ed.), Kitāb al-Aghānī, vol. xxi.
- AJSL: American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures.
- Akhbār: Azraqī, Akhbār Makka.
- Alī and Mu'āwiya: Petersen, Alī and Mu'āwiya in Early Arabic Tradition.
- "Al-Zuhri": Duri, "Al Zuhri, a study on the beginnings of History writing in Islam".
- Amwāl: Abū 'Ubayd, Kitāb al-Amwāl.
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- Arabs in History: Lewis, The Arabs in History.
- Ashrāf: Balādhurī, Ansāb al-Ashrāf, vol. i, ed. Ḥamīdullah.
- Asiatique: Journal asiatique.
- Asmā': Nawawī, Tahdhīb al-Asmā'.
- Asnām: Ibn al-Kalbī, Kitāb al-Asnām.
- As-sunna: 'Ajjāj al-Khatīb, As-sunna qabl at-tadwīn.
- As-sunnat an-Nabawiyya: 'Abbās Ḥamāda, As-sunnat an-Nabawiyya wa makānatuhā fī 't-tashrī'.
- Āthār: Abū Yūsuf, Kitāb al-Āthār.
- Authenticity: Juynboll, The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature.
- Bagh: Khatīb Baghdādī, Tārīkh Baghdād.
- Bā'ith: Ibn Kathīr, Al-Bā'ith al-Hathīth.
- Bayān: Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm.
- Bidāya: Ibn Kathīr, Al-Bidāya wa 'n-Nihāya.
- Bihār: Al-Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Bihār al-Anwār.
- BSOAS: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.
- Buhūth: 'Umari, Akram Diya; Buhūth fī tārīkh as-sunnat al-musharrafā.
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- Dustūr: 'Abd an-Nabī b. 'Abd ar-Rasūl, Dustūr al-'Ulamā'.
- Duwal: Dhahabī, Duwal al-Islām.
- "Earliest Biographies...": Horowitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors."
- Early Islam: Bravmann, The Spiritual Background of early Islam.
- EI (New): Encyclopaedia of Islam (New Edition).
- Ency. Br.: Encyclopaedia Britannica.
- Fā'iqīZamakhsharī, Al-Fā'iq fī Ghariḥ al-Ḥadīth.
- Fajr: Aḥmad Amīn, Fajr al-Islām.
- Fāsil: Ar-Rāmhurmuzī, Al-Muḥaddith al-Fāsil Bayn ar-Rāwī wa 'l-wā'i (MS).
- Fath: Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bārī, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.
- Fath (Intr.): Ibn Hajar, Muqaddima, Fath al-Bārī.
- Fihrist: Ibn an-Nadīm, Al-Fihrist.
- Formative Period: Watt, The Formative Period of Islamic Thought.
- Funūn: Khulī, 'Abd al-'Azīz; Tārīkh Funūn al-Ḥadīth.
- Futūḥ: Balādhurī, Futūḥ al-Buldān, ed. Riḍwān.
- Futūḥ: (Goeje): Balādhurī, Futūḥ al-Buldān, ed. De Goeje.
- Futūḥ Misr: Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ Misr.



GAL: Brockelmann, Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur.  
GAL(S): Brockelmann, Supplement, Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur.  
Hadith lit.: Zubayr Siddiqi, Hadith Literature.  
Hamasa: Abd Allāh at-Tayyib, Al-Hamāsāt as-Sughra.  
Hawālik: Suyūṭī, Tanwīr al-Hawālik 'Alā Muwaṭṭa' Mālik.  
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Hujja: Walī Allāh, Hujjat Allāh al-Bāligha.  
Ibn Māja: Nu'mānī, 'Abd ar-Rashīd; Imām Ibn Māja Awr 'Ilm Ḥadīth.  
IC: Islamic Culture.  
Ihkām: Amīdī, Kitāb al-Ihkām fī uṣūl al-Ahkām.  
Ihyā': Ghazālī, Ihyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn.  
Ikhtilāf: Shāfi'ī, Kitāb Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth.  
Ikhtilāf (A): Abū Yūsuf, Ikhtilāf Abī Ḥanīfa wa'bn Abī Laylā.  
Ikmāl: Walī ad-Dīn Khaṭīb, Al-Ikmāl fī Asmā' ar-Rijāl.  
I'lām: Ibn Tūlūn, I'lām as-Sā'ilīn 'an Kutub Sayyid al-Mursalīn.  
I'lām (Qayyim): Ibn al-Qayyim, I'lām al-Muwaqqi'in.  
'Ilm: Abū Khaythama, Al-'Ilm (MS.).  
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Intā': Maqrīzī, Intā' al-Asmā'.  
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IQ: Islamic Quarterly.  
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Kanz Huf: Ibn as-Sikkīt, Kanz al-Huffāz.  
Kharāj: Abū Yūsuf, Kitāb al-Kharāj.  
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Khitat: Maqrizi, Khitat al-Maqrizi.  
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Nihāya: Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab.

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Qurra': Ibn al-Jazarī, Ghāyat an-Nihāya fī Ṭabacāt al-Qurrā'.

Qūt: Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, Qūt al-Qulūb.

Radd al-Mukhtār: Ibn 'Abidīn, Radd al-Mukhtār 'Alā 'd-Durr al-Mukhtār, Sharḥ Tanwīr al-Absār.

Radd Shaybānī: Shāfi'ī, Kitāb ar-Radd 'Alā Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ash-Shaybānī.

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SD: Dārimī, Sunan (Damascus edition).

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Tahdh: Ibn Hajar, Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb.  
Tahdhith: Qāsimī, Qawā'id at-Tahdhith.  
Tāj: Zabīdī, Tāj al-'Arūs min Sharḥ Jawāhir al-Qāmūs.  
Tāj (J): Jawharī, Tāj al-Lughā.  
Ta'jīl: Ibn Hajar, Ta'jīl al-Manfa'a.  
Talcih: Ibn al-Jawzī, Talcih Fuhūm Ahl al-Athar.  
Tamhīd: Muṣṭafa 'Abd ar-Rāziq, Tamhīd.  
Tanqīh: Ibn al-Wazīr al-Yamānī, Tanqīh al-Anzār fī 'Ulūm al-Āthar.  
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Umm: Shāfi'i, Kitāb al-Umm.  
Usd: Ibn al-Athīr, Usd al-Ghāba.  
Uyūn: Ibn Sayyid an-Nās, Uyūn al-Athar....  
Uyūn (Akh): Ibn Qutayba, Uyūn al-Akhbār.  
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Wasit: Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafa and others. Al-Mu'jam al-Wasit.  
Wathā'iq: Ḥamīdullah, Al-Wathā'iq as-Siyāsīyya.  
Wazarā': Jahshiyārī, Al-Wazarā', Wa'l-Kuttāb.  
Zunūn: Ḥājī Khalīfa, Kashf az-Zunūn 'an Asāmi 'l-Kutub wa'l-Furūn.

Notes:

- i) In the citation of "Est", the first figure refers to the page number of Muhammedanische Studien, and the second one (followed by a stroke) to that of Muslim Studies.
- ii) In the references of the "Qur'ān", the first figure represents the number of the chapter (sūrat) and the second (followed by a colon), the number of the verse (āya). The English renderings of the verses are from Pickthall's The Meaning of the Glorious Koran.

## SUMMARY

The thesis, as its title indicates, is divided into two parts.

In the first part, dealing with the semantics of sunna (Chapter I) and ḥadīth (Chapter II), an attempt has been made to show, by citing copious illustrations from early sources, that these terms, which acquired definite technical meaning in the late second century after the hijra, were used in early Islam in multiple senses. In this connection, the meanings and early usages of various other terms, like ilm, athar, hikma and khavar etc. have been discussed to see how far they were related to the terms 'ḥadīth' and 'sunna'. Also discussed in this context are the different types of sunnas like the 'sunna of the tribe', the 'sunna of Allāh', the 'sunna of Muḥammad', the 'regional sunna', the 'Islamic sunna' and the 'juristic sunna'.

The second part, comprising three chapters, deals with the question of recording of ḥadīth in the early Islamic period.

In Chapter III, it has been shown that writing was fairly common even before the advent of Islam and it received further impetus in the post Islamic period through the educational policy of the Prophet. On the basis of this discussion it has been concluded that if in pre-Islamic times, the wise-sayings, the war-like deeds, the poetry and the genealogies etc. could be recorded in black and white, the sayings and actions of Muḥammad, whose exemplary conduct has been repeatedly recommended in the Qur'ān, were more likely to have been written down in post-Islamic period.

But before substantiating the above inference by referring to actual written collections of early ḥadīth scholars, the contradictory reports, ascribed to the Prophet, regarding the prohibition and permission of writing down his traditions, have been critically reviewed.

Also discussed in this context are various terms and statements which, owing to their misinterpretation by early scholars, formed the bases of the theory of late recording of ḥadīth (Chapter IV).

While the concluding chapter (Chapter V), in the main, focuses on the literary activities of early ḥadīth scholars and mentions their

written collections - both large and small, official and private - it also deals with the meanings and significance of various receptacles of ḥadīth, like ṣaḥīfa, kitāb, nuskha, juz' etc. An investigation into the usages of these terms showed that they did not necessarily imply 'memoranda' and 'small collections' as is sometimes believed.

The study is confined to the period commencing from the Prophet's time till the age of Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.) and immediately thereafter.

## INTRODUCTION

The Prophetic sunna and its repository 'ḥadīth', which form the second indispensable source of Islamic Jurisprudence, occupy an important place in the religious system of Islam.

Although both 'sunna' and 'ḥadīth' generally refer to the instructions of the Prophet and seem, therefore, synonymous terms, yet in their literal and technical connotation they convey different meanings. A semantic study of these terms (Chapters I and II) shows that in the beginning there was a lack of fixity in their technical connotation: while at times they were used as interchangeable terms, on other occasions they signified different senses. It was only gradually that they acquired fixed, well-defined, technical meanings.

Part one (comprising Chapters I and II) of this thesis is devoted to these two terms. In chapter I, dealing with the etymological significance and conceptual development of the term 'sunna', the meaning and scope of various types of sunnas - 'sunna of the tribe', 'sunna of Allāh', 'sunna of Muḥammad', 'regional sunna', 'Islamic sunna' and 'juristic sunna' - have been discussed. In chapter II which deals with the semantics of ḥadīth, an attempt has been made to show, through copious illustrations, that 'sunna' and 'ḥadīth' in early Islam were used in multiple senses. In this connection, various other terms like ilm, athar, ḥikma and khabar etc. have also been discussed to see how far they were related to and,

consequently, interchanged with the term 'ḥadīth'.

More important than the semantic analysis of the terms 'sunna' and 'ḥadīth' is the question of their preservation in written form during the early Islamic period. Although it is almost unanimously believed that the traditions of the Prophet used to be preserved in memory in early times, it is still a debatable issue whether the ahādīth during this period were recorded in black and white. It is to this important problem that part two of the thesis has been devoted.

The section begins with a discussion on the position of writing in general in pre and early Islamic period. Then it discusses the question of writing of ḥadīth in particular. In this context, the contradictory reports, ascribed to the Prophet, regarding the prohibition and permission of writing down of ḥadīth have been critically reviewed and objectively examined (Chapter III). This is followed by a discussion on the theory of late recording of ḥadīth, for which a complete chapter has been devoted. In this context, many technical terms like 'tadwīn', 'taṣnīf', 'akhbaranā', 'ḥaddathanā', and 'an', etc. and several statements of and about the early traditionists which were susceptible to different interpretations and were thus responsible for the emergence of the above theory, have been discussed in fairly great detail (Chapter IV).

On the basis of the conclusions of Chapters III and IV, an attempt has been made to ascertain the period during which the ahādīth of the Prophet began to be recorded in black and white.



It is a fact that in the absence of actual written records of early times, which owing to various natural and other causes could not survive to this day, it is very difficult to say with certainty whether or not the traditions in early times were preserved in writing. The main available source through which this information can be obtained are the reports, occurring in early sources, which refer to the written records of this period. In this way, the testimony to the existence of early written collections of ḥadīth are not always the 'written records' themselves but the 'reports about these written records'. Most of these reports have, however, been proved genuine either through the discovery of some earlier documents or by other circumstantial evidences. In any case, a probe into the rich store of early sources brings to light a number of ḥadīth collections of the period under study.

It is to these early written collections that the concluding chapter (Chapter V) of this thesis is devoted. While, in the main, attention here is focused on the literary activities of the early ḥadīth scholars, the introductory part of the chapter deals with the meaning and usages of various receptacles of ḥadīth, like 'kitāb', 'nuskha', 'juz', etc.

While dealing with the early records, we have confined ourselves to the period commencing from the Prophet's time till the age of Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.) and immediately thereafter. The reason for arbitrarily choosing the period of the literary activities of ḥadīth scholars till Zuhri's time is the fact that the compilations of the post-Zuhri period are fairly well known. It is only the written



records of the first century after the hijra which are in obscurity and need, therefore, investigation.

In the end, it should be pointed out that the list of the scholars whose ḥadīth collections have been mentioned in this concluding chapter is somewhat selective rather than exhaustive.

## PART ONE

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUNNA AND ḤADĪTH

While going through the vast Islamic literature one often comes across the terms 'sunna' and 'ḥadīth'. Although these terms have now acquired standard, well-defined meaning, yet in earlier times there was a lack of fixity in their technical connotation.

In this section an attempt has been made to show, by citing a number of examples from early sources, that both 'sunna' and 'ḥadīth' in early Islam were used in multiple senses and were often interchanged. While making a semantic analysis of these words - in two separate chapters - various other terms like 'ilm, athar, hikma, khavar, etc. have also been discussed to see how far they were related to 'sunna' and 'ḥadīth'.

Also discussed in this section are various types of sunnas like the 'sunna of the tribe', and the 'sunna of Allāh', the 'sunna of Muḥammad', and the 'regional sunna' etc.

## CHAPTER ONE

THE SEMANTICS OF 'SUNNA'1. Etymological significance of 'sunna':-

Etymologically speaking, the word 'sunna' is derived from the root S-N-N, meaning 'to whet or to sharpen (a knife or spear)'.<sup>1</sup> Thus the pre-Islamic poet, Bashāma b. al-Ghadīr, describes the quality of his sword in the words:

"Wa baqā'i maṭrūrīn takhayyarahū

Ṣana'un li tūl as-sann wa 'l-waq'ī"<sup>2</sup>

i.e. "with the endurance of a keen blade which a skilful smith has chosen out for long whetting and polishing..."<sup>3</sup>

From this meaning, the verbal derivative 'sanna' came to mean 'sawwara' i.e. he fashioned a thing or produced it as a model. Thus 'Sanna 't-tīn' means 'he made the clay into pottery'.<sup>4</sup>

As appears from the above example, 'sunna' conveys a sense of originating something or introducing a new practice. For example, the verbal form 'sanna', in the statement 'huwa awwal man sanna 'r-riḥlatayn'<sup>5</sup> (he was the first to introduce the two caravans), refers to Hāshim's introduction (for the first time) of the system of two annual trading caravans - one in winter and the other in summer. To take another example, the Poet Nusayb says:

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<sup>1</sup> Jamhara, ii, 340.

<sup>2</sup> Mufaḍ (Lya11), i, 828.

<sup>3</sup> Mufaḍ (Lya11), ii, 344.

<sup>4</sup> Sīra, 87.; Latā'if, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Lisān, xvii, 91.

"Ka annī sanantu 'l-ḥubba awwala 'āshiqin  
lin an-nāsi lah aḥbabbu min baynihim waḥdī"<sup>1</sup>

i.e. of all the people I appear to be the first lover, for it was no one but me who introduced (for the first time) the institution of love among them.

Next, the verb 'sanna' has the connotation of continuity - an uninterrupted continuous action. Thus the expressions 'Sanantu 'l-mā'a' 'alā wajhī' and 'sanna 't-turāb 'alā wajh al-arḍ' mean respectively 'I kept on pouring water on my face' and 'the dust continued falling on the face of the earth'.<sup>2</sup> To take another example from pre-Islamic poetry, the poet Bishr b. Abī Khāzim, extolling the beauty of his beloved, says:

"Wa ablaja mushric al-khaddayni fakhmin  
Yusannu 'alā marāghimihī 'l-qasāmū"<sup>3</sup>

i.e. she has a bright face with shining, sleek cheeks and a nose on and around which beauty has been showered. We see that the poet in these lines uses the verb sanna in its basic sense of 'continuity' and says that the beauty has been continuously poured on the person of my beloved.

So far, we have seen that the root of 'sunna' has two basic connotations - to introduce or fashion something as a model, and continuity in action. On the basis of these, perhaps, it has been defined as 'a custom or practice to be followed as a model'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lisān, xvii, 89.

<sup>2</sup> Lisān, xvii, 92.

<sup>3</sup> Lufad (Lyall), i, 650.

<sup>4</sup> Lufradāt, 245.

This connotation contains an element of human behaviour - the morality.

Thus using the word in this sense, Bashāma says,

"Ma bada'tum li'n-nāsi sunnatahā

la qa'adtum li'r-rīhi fī raj'ī"<sup>1</sup>

meaning, 'ye set an example for men by your conduct in dealing with him and sit in a place where the wind may change'.<sup>2</sup> Another pre-Islamic poet, Lutalammis, the uncle of ʿArāfa, uses the word 'sunna' in the same sense and says, "Li urītha ba'dī sunnatan yuqtadā bihā", meaning, 'so that I may leave after me (as a legacy) a sunna which will be (taken as a model and hence) imitated'.<sup>3</sup>

The word in the above sense occurs in ḥadīth literature too. For example, it is said, "There is no prophet but that he has disciples and companions who act in accordance with his sunna and follow him".<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the Prophet uses the expression 'sunnat ahl al-kitāb' to refer to a practice he had adopted with respect to the people of the Book. Advising his companions as to how to deal with the Pagians, he is reported to have said, "sunnū bihim sunnat ahl al-kitāb"<sup>5</sup>, meaning 'adopt with them the precedent of the People of the Book'. The act refers to granting the fire worshippers security after receiving the tax (jizya).

'Sanna' has another connotation of 'assigning' and 'fixing'.

<sup>1</sup> Rufad (Lyall), i, 830.

<sup>2</sup> Rufad (Lyall), ii, 345.

<sup>3</sup> Early Islam, 160.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad, (Sh), vi, 176, 187.

<sup>5</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), i, 278 (Zakāt).; Amwāl, 32.; Kharāj, 155.; Sīra, 844.; Asnā', ii, i, 156-157.

In this sense, it comes parallel to 'farada' and 'afrada'. To take for example, when yazīd b. 'abd al-lalīk was approached by Khālīd b. al-luṭarrīf, who asked the former to give his sister's hand in marriage, he said, "My father had assigned (abī qad sanna) for his wives twenty thousand dīnars (as nuptial gift). So if you give me that amount (then I shall comply with your request and give you (my sister) in marriage.)"<sup>1</sup>

We can very well see that the verb 'sanna' in the above report has been used in the sense of farada or afrada, meaning 'fixed' or 'assigned'.

Another example of 'sanna' in the sense of afrada is the report in which 'Umar, being highly impressed by the grand performance of the soldiers, is said to have assigned (sanna) to them a stipend of two thousand dīnars.<sup>2</sup>

As we can very well see, the verbal form 'sanna' in both the above examples mean 'farada' or 'afrada', meaning 'assigned'.

Another derivation of the term 'sunna' is sanān, sunān or sinān, meaning 'path' or 'beaten track'.<sup>3</sup> Thus the expression 'tanahha 'an sanān at-tarīq' means 'get aside from the middle part of the road'.<sup>4</sup> We notice that in this sense also the original connotation

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<sup>1</sup> Early Islam, 152.

<sup>2</sup> Annales, i, 2564.

<sup>3</sup> Lukhtār, 317.; Sīra, 844.; Asmā', II, i, 156-157.

<sup>4</sup> Knaz Huf, 471.; Lisān, xvii, 90.; Ḥaḡh, 333.

of 'continuity' is implied, for the formation of a path or track is actually the result of continuous treading on particular piece of land by travellers. This similarity in its basic connotation made 'sunna' synonymous with 'tarīo' or 'tarīca', meaning 'path'. The poet Ufrūn uses it in this sense when he says,

"La ma fadaw biakhīhim min muhawwilatin

Akha 's-Sakūni wa lā jāru 'ala 's-sunani"<sup>1</sup>

i.e. "they would not have <sup>re</sup> deemed in place of their brother from a threatening danger a man of as-Sakūn, and they would not have departed in respect of him from the trodden tracks."<sup>2</sup> On the basis of its inherent meaning as a 'track' or 'path', sunna has sometimes been defined as 'at-tarīo al-aqwa'<sup>3</sup> (the straight path), and 'at-tarīo al-maslūka'<sup>4</sup> or 'at-tarīo al-mu'abbada'<sup>5</sup> (the beaten track).

The next stage in the evolution of the meaning of sunna is the extension of the significance of the term to human behaviour. In this sense it came to imply 'a way or manner of acting' and became an equivalent of sīra. The meaning of the terms 'sunna' and 'sīra' are so identical that they were often interchanged. Thus, while quoting the famous couplet<sup>6</sup> of Khālīd b. 'Utba al-Hudhalī<sup>7</sup>, the lexicographers have replaced the 'sunna' by 'sīra'. Jawharī<sup>8</sup>, Ibn Fāris<sup>9</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Mufaḍ (Lyall), i, 525.

<sup>2</sup> Mufaḍ (Lyall), ii, 203.

<sup>3</sup> Qūt, iv, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Funūn, 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Aḍwā', 16.

<sup>6</sup> The couplet reads as follows:

"Fa lā tajza 'an min sīratin anta sirtahā  
Fa awalū rāḍin sunnetan man yasīruhā"

<sup>7</sup> variant 'Khālīd b. Zuhayr' (cf. Jamhara, ii, 340.).

<sup>8</sup> Tāj (J), ii, 383.

<sup>9</sup> Maḥāyīs, iii, 61.

Ibn al-Anzūr<sup>1</sup>, for instance report the above verse with 'sunna' in both lines of the couplet, whereas Zabīdī uses 'sīra' in the first line and 'sunna' in the second.<sup>2</sup>

The notable Western scholars have interpreted the word 'sunna' as 'custom'<sup>3</sup>, 'precedent'<sup>4</sup>, 'practice'<sup>5</sup>, 'path'<sup>6</sup>, 'way of acting'<sup>7</sup>, 'procedure'<sup>8</sup> or 'beaten track'<sup>9</sup>. On the basis of evidences available to us, the best rendering of the meaning of 'sunna' appears to be 'the way or manner of acting', which, when taken both in the active and passive sense, comprehends all similar equivalents, like practice, custom etc.

## 2. Meaning of sunna:

### (i) 'Practice' in general:-

In itself the word 'sunna' is colourless, meaning, merely a 'practice' - good or bad<sup>10</sup>, approved or disapproved<sup>11</sup>. Thus using the word 'sunna' in this sense, the pre-Islamic poet, Khālid b. 'Utba, says:

"Fa lā tajiza 'an min sunnatin anta sirtahā

Fa awwalu rādin sunnatan man yasīruhā"<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lisān, vi, 56.

<sup>2</sup> Tāj, ix, 244.

<sup>3</sup> Mahomet, i, p. xxxiii.; Lst, ii, 13/25.

<sup>4</sup> QMJ, 58.

<sup>5</sup> Mohammed, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Robson, "Tradition, the second foundation of Islam", Muslim world, vol. XLI:1, (January, 1951), p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Selected works, 268.

<sup>8</sup> Selected works, 268.

<sup>9</sup> Intellectual, 91.

<sup>10</sup> Jamhara, ii, 340.

<sup>11</sup> Lisbān, i, 312.

<sup>12</sup> Tāj (J), ii, 383.; laqāyis, iii, 61.; Lisān, vi, 56.; Tāj, ix, 244, with slight variation.



i.e. Do not be hesitant about the practice you have introduced, for the first person to be satisfied with the practice (sunna) is the one who practised it for the first time.

We find occasional mention of 'sunnat ḥasana'<sup>1</sup> or 'sunnat khayr'<sup>2</sup> (good practice) and 'sunnat sayyi'a'<sup>3</sup> or 'sunnat sharr'<sup>4</sup> (bad practice) where the word 'sunna' has been used in the sense of practice in general. Thus the expressions 'sunnat 'Umar'<sup>5</sup>, 'sunnat ibn fulānin'<sup>6</sup> and 'sunnat Abī Bakr'<sup>7</sup> refer to the practice - religious, social and political - of the persons named. Similarly, we find references of 'the sunna set up by good people (as-sālihīn)'<sup>8</sup>, 'sunna of the jurists'<sup>9</sup>, 'sunna of the muslims at large'<sup>10</sup>, and 'sunna of the first two caliphs'<sup>11</sup>, and so on.

That the term 'sunna' indicated 'a practice in general' is also evident from the following report, found in al-'Id al-Farīd. Tracing the origin of the use of the formula "Bi 'sm Allāh ar-Rahman ar-Rahīm" in letters, Ibn 'Abd Rabbih remarks that the first person to use it in full form was the Prophet, after whom it became a practice

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<sup>1</sup> Sh., iv, 223 ('Ilm).; Annales, i, 3049.

<sup>2</sup> Jāmi', x, 143 ('Ilm).

<sup>3</sup> Sh., iv, 223 ('Ilm).

<sup>4</sup> Jāmi', x, 143 ('Ilm).

<sup>5</sup> Amwāl, 532, 533.; Est, ii, 120/116.; Musnad (Sh), viii, 78.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad (Sh), viii, 169.

<sup>7</sup> Khulafā', 154.

<sup>8</sup> Kharāj, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Siyar, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Annales, i, 3142, 3228.

<sup>11</sup> Annales, i, 2976, 3044, 3276.; ii, 1392.; Kharāj, 184.

(sunna).<sup>1</sup> He further says: "The Companions and Successors followed the Prophet's style. This 'practice' continued until the reign of Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, who changed it. Then Walīd's practice (sunnat al-Walīd) continued till our own times except during the reigns of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and Yazīd al-Kāmil, who, instead, followed the practice of the Prophet."<sup>2</sup>

We can very well see in the example cited above that the word 'sunna', by itself meant 'practice in general'.

(ii) Customary laws:-

We have seen that the literal meaning of 'sunna' connotes the sense of practice in general. But in defined restricted sense it can be equated with 'customary laws' - the native codes of unwritten laws and traditions by which the members of earlier communities regulated their lives. If we peruse the legal definition of customary law and examine the essential requirements of 'custom' we will notice that 'sunna' in pre-Islamic and early Islamic period, connoted a sense similar to customary law.

Customary law has been defined as "the experience of generations which successively have cast this and that aside, until at last some course remained open which provided itself the most workable and acceptable."<sup>3</sup> According to this definition customary law contains an essential ingredient of 'antiquity.' In the legal terminology, one of the seven requisites necessary to make a

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<sup>1</sup> Iqd, iv, 243.

<sup>2</sup> Iqd, iv, 243.

<sup>3</sup> Customary Law, 189.

particular custom good is that 'it must have been used so long that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary.'<sup>1</sup> Customary laws are, therefore, basically old and traditional.

'Continuity' is another feature of customary law. The term 'customary' itself suggests that a certain pattern of conduct has been adopted by people for such considerable length of time that it acquired the status of a custom.

Another characteristic of customary law is its being 'normative' in nature. Custom, to primitive man, was inextricably interwoven into, and inseparable from, religion. Such being the case, customary laws were believed to be divinely sanctioned, the implication being that the laws did contain an element of normativeness.

Lastly, customary laws have no political sanction behind them save that of religion and force of public opinion.

Now, if we take up the word 'sunna' as used in early literature we notice that it possessed most of the characteristics of customary law, hence synonymous with it. It was a rule of conduct for the bedouin society; it was ancient; continuously followed; normative; unwritten; and had the force of law. Besides, 'sunna', like customary laws, comprised, in its scope, a considerable variety of religious, social, legal and political matters. Let us take a few examples from available sources to see how far the term 'sunna' was applicable to various forms of customary law.

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<sup>1</sup> Ency. Br. (14th edition), vi, 904.

We have seen earlier that in itself the term 'sunna' is a neutral word, meaning 'practice'. But in certain contexts, it referred to the social and religious rites of the community. This aspect is apparent in the following example: When the Jews of Arabia noticed that the Prophet prayed towards Jerusalem, they commented, "Although Muhammad asserts that he has brought a new religion, we do not find him doing anything new in his prophethood. Does he not pray towards our 'Qibla' and thus follows our custom (yastasannu bisunnatinā)?"<sup>1</sup> In this report the Jews use the word 'sunna' to describe the usage of their religion.

The word 'sunna' also denoted the social practices of the community. Ibn Sa'd quotes a report describing the method of burial of deceased. He reports: "On the death of Adam, Angels dug out a grave, prayed for him and addressed Adam's sons thus: 'This is your practice (hādhihi sunnatukum) with regard to burial of the deceased'."<sup>2</sup> The word 'sunna' here implies the social custom of the community.

The moral and legal usages of pre-Islamic Arabia were also expressed by the term 'sunna'. The institutions of marriage, divorce and other family relationships were part of the customs followed by Arabs. The details of many such legal rules are found in kitāb al-Muḥabbar of Ibn Ḥabīb. The author calls these institutions 'sunna' and mentions them under the title:

"As-sunan allatī kānat al-Jāhiliyya sannathā fa baqya 'l-islām ba'dahā wa ascatā ba'dahā." 3

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<sup>1</sup> Nihāya, i, 329.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, i, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Muḥabbar, 309.

As the author under this heading mentions only the legal matters, it appears that 'sunna' was used to denote the legal customs of the pagan society.

The term 'sunna' also denoted the general practice of the community as is evident from the following report: Once when the Muslims happened to pass by a large green tree, named by the pagans as 'Dhāt Anwāt', they asked the Prophet to name one such tree for them as well, so that they could also, like the infidels, visit the tree every year, hang their armours on it, slaughter animals and stay there for a day. Hearing this, the Prophet drew their attention to a Qur'ānic verse<sup>1</sup> and said, "Innahā ~~'sunna~~ sunan man kāna qablakum" (In fact these practices (sunan) are of those who were before you).<sup>2</sup>

In canonical collections, too, the reports are found where the word 'sunna' has been used by the Prophet to describe the customary practice of the community. Bukhārī for example, reports: Among the three categories of people who are cursed by Allāh are those who seek in Islam the practices of the 'Jāhiliyya' (mubtaghin fī 'l-Islām sunnat al-Jāhiliyya.)<sup>3</sup>. The 'sunna', used here, refers to the cumulative practices of the pagan society.

<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 4:26..

<sup>2</sup> Akhbār, i, 77.; Nazrat, 'Āmma, 116.

<sup>3</sup> SB, iv, 318. (Diyāt)..

Another example can be quoted from a report found in Suyūṭī's Tārīkh al-Khulafā'. It is reported that when Egypt was conquered, its inhabitants called on 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ and said: "Our Nile hath an observance (sunna) without which it will not rise." About this 'sunna' they informed him that 'on a particular day they sought a virgin girl, obtained the consent of her parents, robed her with garments and ornaments and threw her into the Nile'. 'Amr wrote to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb about this practice who, in his reply, instructed the former to tell the inhabitants of Egypt that the flowing of the river had nothing to do with this superstitious practice.<sup>1</sup>

Ṭabarī provides us with another example where the word 'sunna' refers to the customary practice of the Persians. He reports that after the battle of Qādsīyya, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ wrote to Caliph 'Umar: 'God has helped us against the people of Persia, who follow certain practices (sunan) of their forefathers and co-religionists....'<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Hishām al-Kalbī has mentioned a score of practices (sunan) of the Jahiliyya period, some of which were retained by Islam while others were disapproved.<sup>3</sup> The sunan mentioned by him apparently referred to the practices of the community.

In the light of these examples, we can say that the term 'sunna' in early times referred to various customary practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Khulafā', 127.

<sup>2</sup> Annales, i, 2366.

<sup>3</sup> Aṣṇām, 19-48.

(iii) Innovation:

In strict theological sense 'bid'a' (innovation) is used in contradistinction to 'sunna'. Thus 'anything introduced into Islam without having its precedent in the established sunna is known as bid'a.'<sup>1</sup>

Right from the pre-Islamic era until modern times bid'a has been generally condemned. In the words of Ḥassān b. Thābit, "Among all the attributes the worst are the innovations."<sup>2</sup> The Prophet himself is reported to have condemned bid'a. To take for instance, he said in one of his sermons: "He whom God leads cannot be misled by anybody; he whom He misleads, no one can set him upon the right path. Verily, the most truthful communication is the Book of Allāh, the best guidance is that of Muḥammad, and the worst of all things are innovations; every innovation (bid'a) is heresy; every heresy an error; and every error leads to Hell."<sup>3</sup>

This report, either in full or in part, is found in almost all ḥadīth collections<sup>4</sup>, which is very significant. Bid'a was viewed with such disfavour that Tirmidhī, in his Jāmi', devoted a whole chapter to it.<sup>5</sup> Abū Qilāba (d. 104 A.H.) went so far as to say that 'he who introduces bid'a has forfeited his life.'<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fath, iv, 180.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 936.

<sup>3</sup> SN, iii, 188-189 (Ṣalāt al-Idayn).; Bayān, ii, 182.

<sup>4</sup> SB, iv, 420 (I'tisām...).; SAD, iv, 280 (Sunna), ḥadīth no. 4606.; Jāmi', x, 148 (Ilm).; SD (Med.), i, 43-44.; Musnad, iii, 310, 371.

<sup>5</sup> Jāmi', x, 143 (Ilm), where we find the chapter heading "al-akhḍu bi's-sunna wa 'jtināb al-bid'a (Holding fast to the sunna and refraining from the bid'a)".

<sup>6</sup> SD (Med.), i, 44.

Bid'a is generally considered as antithesis of sunna<sup>1</sup>, both being diametrically opposed to each other. But a semantic study of these terms yields a different result, according to which sunna, contrary to traditional belief, comes parallel to bid'a. We see that the verb 'sanna', literally means 'he originated an act'.<sup>2</sup> The Prophet himself uses the word in this sense when, referring to a practice of Mu'adh, he says, "Indeed Mu'adh has 'instituted' (sanna) among you (a sunna) according to which you should act."<sup>3</sup> Commenting upon this ḥadīth, Ibn al-Qayyim says, "The Prophet (by this statement) meant that Mu'adh's action has been made a 'sunna' not because it was performed by him but because it was in accordance with the commands of Allāh and the Prophet."<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-Qayyim's above comment notwithstanding, the fact remains that Mu'adh's action was literally 'an innovation', for it was done for the first time. It appears that Ibn al-Qayyim himself took the verb 'sanna' in the sense of 'doing something new which people knew not and which they afterwards followed'.<sup>5</sup> His attempt to interpret the ḥadīth in the light of traditional view of sunna (i.e. the only valid sunna is 'the sunna of the Prophet') itself suggests that a second interpretation (based on the literal sense of 'sunna') was also possible. This interpretation brought 'sunna' parallel to bid'a, hence Ibn al-Qayyim's attempt to interpret differently.

'Umar also uses the verb 'sanna' in the above sense when he says,

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<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 936.; I'tisām, i, 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> Lisān, xvii, 90.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad, v, 246.

<sup>4</sup> I'lām (Qayyim), ii, 228.

<sup>5</sup> Lisān, xvii, 90.



"(The acceptable and valid) sunna is the one which has been instituted (for the first time) by Allāh and His Messenger (As-sunnat mā sannahū 'llāh wa rasūluhū)."<sup>1</sup>

The word in the above sense occurs in a report dealing with political disturbances during 'Uthman's reign. It is reported that while the Caliph was imprisoned in his house and people had demanded his resignation, he consulted 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar in this matter. The latter is said to have advised 'Uthmān in these words: "In my opinion you should not institute such practice in Islam (lā arā an tasunna hādhihī 's-sunna fi 'l-Islām) that whenever subjects become displeased with their ruler, they start asking for his dismissal. Since the caliphate is a divine institution, you should not step down."<sup>2</sup> It is clear from the statement that the verbal form 'tasunna', derived from 'sanna' refers to the establishment of a new practice in Islam which hitherto was not in existence.

Here are a few more examples in which the verb 'sanna' has been used in the sense of 'instituting an act for the first time':

(i) The Prophet is reported to have said: "No soul is wrongfully killed but the first man's (i.e. Adam's) son (i.e. Qābīl) will be held (partly) responsible, for he was the first who instituted killing (awwal man sann al-qatl)."<sup>3</sup>

(ii) Gabriel is said to be the one who originated (and taught) the(form) of prayer (awwal man sanna 's-salāt).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I'tisām, i, 74.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, III, i, 45.

<sup>3</sup> SB, i, 323 (Janā'iz).; SM, iii, 98 (Qasāma...).

<sup>4</sup> Mushnad, iv, 121.

(iii) It is reported that Khubayb b. 'Adī was the first to introduce for the first time (awwal man sanna) the institution of performing two rak'a (bowings) of prayers before being killed.<sup>1</sup>

(iv) It is reported that 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was the first person to fix for the first time (sanna) the bloodwit (diyat an-nafs) as one hundred camels.<sup>2</sup>

The examples cited above clearly indicate that the verb 'sanna' from which 'sunna' is derived is synonymous with 'bada'a' and 'bid'a' respectively. It is, therefore, interesting to note that although in certain cases - like the few mentioned above - sunna becomes synonymous with 'bid'a', yet the latter is looked upon with great disfavour. Right from the pre-Islamic era until today, bid'a has been condemned. "It had to struggle hard", says Schacht, "to infiltrate into the established 'sunnah' of the community."<sup>3</sup>

Now, a very fundamental question arises in one's mind: 'if every new practice or custom is considered as 'bid'a' - as the definition suggests - should we consider the new laws given by the Prophet as 'bid'a'? Apparently the answer is in the affirmative. All the practices introduced by the Prophet were in fact innovations in their initial stages, although they were termed as 'sunna'. For instance, he says, "one who institutes a good practice (sanna sunnatan ḥasana) shall be rewarded...and one who institutes a bad practice (sanna sunnatan sayyi'a).....shall be punished."<sup>4</sup> 'Sunna' in this

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<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 641.; Magh, 349.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, I, i, 54.

<sup>3</sup> Islamic law, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad (ṭ), iii, 93.; SM, iv, 223 (Ilm).

ḥadīth refers to new practices to be introduced in Islam, hence synonymous with 'bid'a'. Similarly, Abū Yūsuf asks Hārūn ar-Rashīd "to introduce some good 'sunna'."<sup>1</sup> Here, too, introduction of new practices means innovations in the existing established practices. Thus the sunna is used in the sense of 'bid'a'.

In both these examples the 'practices' have been described as 'sunna' although they refer to 'bid'a' in technical sense. The argument can be extended to the newly introduced practices of the Prophet. In fact, they are 'bid'a' in purely literal sense, yet they are known as 'sunna'.

The question arises if sunna and bid'a were literally synonymous in meaning, why the former was preferred over the latter. This is probably because of the popular normative concept of sunna. The Arabs, conservative in nature, believed that sunna contained an element of ethical value. They thought that a new sunna will also contain the quality of normativeness. Bid'a, on the other hand, was an unapproved thing to Arab mind. Thus a newly introduced practice, if it was morally good, was called a sunna, otherwise a bid'a. The former term seems to have been used for agreeable practices; the latter for disagreeable ones.

As the Prophet was considered a model to be followed, his actions and the laws and customs prescribed by him, ipso facto contained moral and ethical value. That is why although most of his newly introduced practices were just innovations, they were never termed as 'bid'a': instead they were known as 'sunna'.

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<sup>1</sup> Kharāj, 76. "

The above distinction between agreeable and disagreeable practices is based on the usual terms, 'good bid'a' and 'bad bid'a'. As regards the former, the Caliph 'Umar is reported to have said about an innovation in the rite of ṣalāt, "Ni'mat al-bid'a hādhihī",<sup>1</sup> meaning, this is a "good innovation." Ash-Shāfi'ī has clearly stated, "An innovation which contradicts the Koran, a sunna, an athar, or ijmā is a heretical bid'a; if, however, something new is introduced which is not evil in itself and does not contradict the above-mentioned authorities of religious life, then it is a praiseworthy, unobjectionable innovation."<sup>2</sup>

Significant in this connection is the remark of Grunebaum, who says, "It is consensus which can accept an innovation, at first considered heretical, and, by accepting it, make it part and parcel of the sunna, overriding traditional views in its way."<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Kinds of Sunna

Having discussed various shades of its meaning, let us now consider the contents and scope of different types of sunna. Ever since pre-Islamic era, the sunna underwent gradual changes and its scope widened with the passage of time. In the beginning, Arabs adhered strictly to the customary practices of their tribes which we call the 'sunna of the tribe'. But since Arabian tribes had no constitution, tribal laws, though generally acceptable, were not strictly enforceable. "It was protected by no sanction and enforced

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<sup>1</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), i, 238.; SB, i, 499 (Ṣalāt)

<sup>2</sup> Mst, ii, 26-27/36-37.; Irshād, x, 342.

<sup>3</sup> Med. Islam, 149. .

by no authority", says Macdonald.<sup>1</sup>

With the advent of Islam, the scope of sunna widened. The concept of God, already prevalent in Arabian society<sup>2</sup>, was given due consideration and the sanction of law was left with the fear of wrath of God. The Qur'ān draws attention of Arabs to the 'sunna of Allāh' with respect to earlier generations. The same source which provided the concept of 'sunna of Allāh' to the Arabian society demanded absolute obedience to Allāh's Prophet. In addition to the Qur'ānic injunctions 'to follow the Prophet of Allāh', two more factors became responsible to replace the 'sunna of the tribe' by the 'sunna of the Prophet'. Firstly, the Arabs believed that 'the best man to rule a tribe or clan was the man who was outstanding in wisdom, prudence, and judgement'.<sup>3</sup> This man after Islam was Muḥammad. Secondly, they thought that Islamic community 'was divinely founded and was living in accordance with divinely-given mores'.<sup>4</sup>

Alongside the 'Prophet's sunna' were the living traditions of ancient schools, which we call 'the regional sunna'. Then came the 'Islamic sunna' and the 'juristic sunna'.

Let us, now, see these forms of sunna in greater detail to have a clear picture of their scope.

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<sup>1</sup> Muslim Theology, 68.

<sup>2</sup> Watt, "Belief in a 'High God' in Pre-Islamic Mecca", Journal of Semitic Studies, XVI, no. 1 (1971), pp. 35-40.

<sup>3</sup> Statesman, 59.

<sup>4</sup> Intellectual, 14.

(i) 'Sunna of the tribe':-

The population of Arabia before Islam was divided into innumerable political groupings called tribes. These tribes were again sub-divided into many independent units of families, whose heads elected chief of the tribe. In theory, there was no special qualification required for the tribal chief, but practically the noble ancestry was the greatest factor to determine his authority. The members of the tribe, though divided into many family units, paid full allegiance to their tribal head and followed the traditional customs of the said tribe in particular and of the community in general. The individuals, in fact, were indebted to the tribe for their privileges, for their dignity and for their very existence. This tribal system implied the absence of legal protection for the individuals outside the tribe, hence the importance of tribal laws.

The Arabs, living in such independent but loose political units, were bound by traditions and precedents. They clung to the customs of their forefathers and felt great pride in so doing. We find a number of references in the Qur'ān, where the Meccans have been reproached for this reason.<sup>1</sup> Schacht has rightly remarked that "whatever the forefathers had done deserved to be imitated...was the golden rule of the Arabs."<sup>2</sup>

As the society was divided into various tribes, it is natural that their members would give prior importance to the customary laws of their own tribe and name them as 'sunna'.

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 18:55; 33:38; 33:62; 35:43; 48:23.

<sup>2</sup> Islamic law, 17.

We find many instances in pre and early Islamic literature where the poets and historians are reported as using the word 'sunna' in the sense of 'tribal custom'. Labīd b. Rabī'a, for instance, says:

"Lān ma'sharin sannat lahum ābā 'uhum

Wa likulli qawmin sunnatun wa imāmuḥā"<sup>1</sup>

meaning, '(they belong) to a group of people to whom their forefathers have prescribed (certain rules) and (as a matter of fact) each tribe has its own custom (sunna) and its rule or model (imam).'

To take another example, extolling his tribe for possessing a number of qualities, including certain customs of their own, the poet Abū Qays b. al-Aslat says: "The people knew that your leaders are ever the best peoples of the stations of Ḥina, the best in counsel, loftiest in custom (a'lāhu sunnatan), and most truthful among the assemblies."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the poet Aymān b. Khuraym, while referring to the assassination of 'Uthmān, says, "What a wicked sunna had their first one (ancestors) established (fa ayya sunnat jawr sanna awwaluhum)."<sup>3</sup> In this second example, the verb 'sanna', along with its subject 'awwaluhum (their ancestors)' and the specific object 'sunnat', clearly indicates that the noun 'sunna' used here refers to the 'sunna of a certain tribe'.

Again, the pagan poet, Ufnūn uses the plural, 'sunan' to refer to certain tribal customs. He says, "They would not have redeemed in place of their brother from a threatening danger a man of as-Sakūn, and they would not have departed in respect of him from

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<sup>1</sup> Qasā'id, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 180.

<sup>3</sup> Early Islam, 165.

the precedents (sunan) (of their tribe)."<sup>1</sup>

That 'sunna' referred to 'tribal custom' is evident from the following examples as well:

It is reported that 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, after his marriage, stayed in the bride's house for a period of three days because 'it was the custom among them (Kānat tilka 's-sunna 'indahum)'.<sup>2</sup> The word "indahum" (among them), here, is significant, for it shows that in pre-Islamic Arabia different tribes had different customs, for which the word 'sunna' was used.

To take another example, when 'Abd-al-Muṭṭalib wanted to fulfil his vow by giving the sacrifice of his son, 'Abd-Allāh, his near relatives advised him not to do so, saying, "Do not slaughter him, for if you will do this, the slaughtering of sons will become a 'sunna' (custom) among us."<sup>3</sup> This 'sunna' also seems to refer to the 'sunna of the tribe'.

(ii) 'Sunna of Allāh':-

The word 'sunna' has been invariably translated as custom, practice or precedent to suit different contexts. All these renderings, however, convey one central idea - that 'sunna' has the force of law. The fact that customs and practices were strictly adhered to by the bedouins suggests that sunna could not have been easily ignored.

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<sup>1</sup> Mufaḍ (Lyall), i, 525.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, i, 58.

<sup>3</sup> Akhbār, ii, 36.



The judges and arbiters of pre-Islamic era had to respect the established sunna while delivering judgement. The heads of tribes were in no better position in so far as the customary law was concerned. Muḥammad, too, had to approve a number of Jāhiliyya practices because they had a force of law in the society.

With the coming of Islam, another type of sunna - the sunna of Allāh - was introduced in Arabian society. Sunna as such was not a new concept to Arabs; they were already following the 'sunna of their forefathers' and the 'sunna of the tribe'. The concept of 'Allāh' too, was not unknown, though in the form of plurality of gods.<sup>1</sup> No doubt, these terms existed in the society all along, yet they were not inter-related so far. The Qur'ān now used them as a compound term and introduced thereby a new concept - the sunna of Allāh.

Long before the coming of Muḥammad, the Arabs, in their judicial system, believed in the supremacy of Allāh. The judgements of kāhins - the soothsayers or judges - were enforced on the basis of a belief that they came from a supernatural power. "Their (kāhins) decision", says Fischer, "is considered as a kind of divine judgement against which there is no appeal."<sup>2</sup> So, when the Qur'ān spoke of 'sunna of Allāh',<sup>3</sup> the Arabs found no difficulty in accepting that the law of Allāh was a reality.

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<sup>1</sup> Watt, "Belief in a 'High God' in Pre-Islamic Mecca", Journal of Semitic Studies, XVI, No. 1., (Manchester University Press: Spring, 1971), pp. 35-40.

<sup>2</sup> Fischer, 'Kāhin', Encyclopaedia of Islam, ii, 625.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 33:62.; 35:43.; 48:23.

At the opportune time, when Arabs' mind was prepared to accept the supremacy of God, the Qur'ān claimed that the 'sunna of Allāh' was eternal, and binding, hence to be followed. At the same time, it reminded them of the fate of earlier people who had shown arrogance and disobeyed the fixed laws.<sup>1</sup> The expression 'sunnat al-Awwalīn'<sup>2</sup> was ~~used to convey this warning.~~ used to convey this warning. The purpose of this threat was to show that the 'sunna of Allāh' had the force of law. The Arabs paid heed to the message of the Qur'ān and yielded to the new form of 'sunna' - the 'sunna of Allāh'. It was quite in agreement with the temper of Arabs. We know that they respected the customs of their forefathers and valued the decisions of the kāhins, believing, in the latter case, that their decision had a supernatural origin and that belief served as a sanction. This shows that they had already the concept of supernatural laws which had to be obeyed. So, when the Qur'ān mentioned the 'sunna of Allāh', they readily approved of it. Muḥammad also 'taught them that a community under God was more meaningful and thus of greater political promise than a community under tribal law.'<sup>4</sup> Prof. Watt in this connection, aptly remarks: "while some material self-interest may have been a factor in conversion, the major factor was perhaps the religious - the attractiveness of the dynamic image of the Islamic community as a charismatic one."<sup>5</sup>

The expression 'sunnat Allāh', in verses 33:62; 35:43;

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<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr (Bayḍ), iv, 184.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 35:43.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 18:55.

<sup>4</sup> Med. Islam, 72.

<sup>5</sup> Intellectual, 15.

48:23 and 33:38, implies that 'Allāh's law cannot be changed and they are eternal'. While on the first three occasions (33:62; 35:43; 48:23), 'sunnat Allāh' refers to God's dealing with the people who believed in the plurality of gods<sup>1</sup>, in the last mentioned passage (33:38) it refers to the privileges granted to earlier prophets through Allāh's ordinance (sunna).<sup>2</sup>

The word 'sunna' in all these places has the basic connotation of 'laws of Allāh' as promulgated for earlier peoples. In verse 3:137, the plural 'sunan' occurs to denote the 'manner' in which the earlier disbelievers were dealt with by Allāh. Although the expression 'sunan' in the passage refers to the fate of disbelieving nation, it cannot be rendered as 'judgement' as is suggested by Wensinck in his article on 'sunna' in the Encyclopaedia of Islam.<sup>3</sup> In fact the word indicates the law or Allāh's modus operandi. It referred, therefore, to the 'procedure' applied by God in dealing with the ancient sinners, and not to the 'judgement' which was the result of disobeying His laws.

The expression 'sunnat Allāh' also occurs in the sources other than the Qur'ān. Bukhārī, for instance, quotes the coronation oath of 'Abd al-Malik, where 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar is reported as saying: "I swear to obey the servant of God, 'Abd al-Malik, according to the 'sunna of Allāh' and the 'sunna of the Prophet'...."<sup>4</sup> Tabari also

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<sup>1</sup> Watt, "Belief in a 'High God' in pre-Islamic Mecca", Journal of Semitic Studies, XVI, N. 1 (Spring, 1971), pp. 35-40.

<sup>2</sup> Tafsīr (Jal), ii, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Wensinck, "Sunna", Encyclopaedia of Islam, iv, 555.

<sup>4</sup> SB, iv, 402 (Ahkām), 419 (I'tisām...).

provides us with several reports where the expression 'sunnat Allāh' occurs.<sup>1</sup> Another reference to 'sunnat Allāh' is found in Ibn Khaldūn's muqaddima. Here, it is reported that the institution of (building) a maqsūra (closet) 'was in fact a 'sunnah of Allāh' with respect to his servants.'<sup>2</sup> In other words, it was instituted in accordance with God's law.

Shāfi'ī also uses the expression 'sunnat Allāh' and clarifies its meaning in the following example. Referring to a certain rite, he says: "It is a 'sunna of Allāh' to enter the haram (the sacred precinct of Mecca) clad in ihrām (the prescribed pilgrim's dress)."<sup>3</sup> Shāfi'ī clearly means by 'sunna of Allāh' the law of God as contained in the Qur'ān and explained by the Prophet.

It seems strange that although we find frequent mention of the expression 'sunna of Allāh' in the Qur'ān, we do not come across even a single reference of 'sunna of Muḥammad' - the oft-quoted phrase of early scholars. In order to find reasons for the absence of this expression, we have to have a fairly clear idea about the concept of 'sunna' among the Arabs in the days of Jāhiliyya.

We have already seen that the Arabs were too conservative in adhering to the customs and traditions of their forefathers. We have also noticed that the 'sunna' was believed to have supernatural origin which served as sanction to the enforcement of kāhin's judgements.

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<sup>1</sup> Annales, i, 3427.; ii, 518, 1369.

<sup>2</sup> Muqaddima, 269.

<sup>3</sup> Early Islam, 135,n, citing Umm, v. 2,2; p. 121, 8.

It is also known that these simple Arabs could hardly distinguish between secular and religious laws.<sup>1</sup> Thus they faithfully followed the sunna which included religious and secular laws alike.

Under these circumstances, and at this initial stage of the development of the concept of 'sunna of Muḥammad', only the 'sunna of Allāh' or God's law could be easily acceptable to the Arabs. The 'sunna of Muḥammad' had yet to be introduced, let alone be accepted. Hence its absence in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān, however, accomplished the task of introducing the concept of the 'sunna of the Prophet' very tactfully. While on the one hand, it diverted the Arabs' attention from the 'sunna of the tribe' to the 'sunna of Allāh', on the other hand, it introduced to them the dynamic personality of Muḥammad with these forceful words, "Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allāh a good example."<sup>2</sup> This was done with a view to replace the 'sunna of the tribe' by the 'sunna of Muḥammad'. The 'sunna of Allāh' served only as an intermediary link in this gradual switch over. And very soon they were "taught the lesson", says Grunebaum, "that a community under God was more meaningful and thus of greater political promise than a community under a tribal law."<sup>3</sup>

(iii) 'Sunna of Muḥammad':-

At the advent of Islam, the Arabian society was introduced to the concept of 'sunna of Allāh' which was easily acceptable to the community because of their belief in supernatural origin of law. The problem arose when the community had to adopt the normative

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<sup>1</sup> Gray, "Customs", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, iv, 375.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 33:21 .

<sup>3</sup> Med. Islam, 72.

laws (sunna) of the Prophet.

The Prophet, who realised this difficulty, adopted a practical course to deal with this delicate issue of sunna. He was commanded in the Qur'ān to enforce his authority on Pagan Arabs and provide them, by his conduct, with a code of laws replacing those of 'ancient customs'. In carrying out this commandment of God, the Prophet did not alter the entire old customs. He had studied the minds of his own people. He knew fully well that aversion to change was the prominent feature of bedouin life. Knowing well how ardent they were in adhering to their customs, he changed the 'ancient sunna' only when absolutely necessary, modified few and retained the rest. As regards retention of old customs, he not only tolerated them, but, in early stages, he went so far as 'to prescribe in Islam, the virtues of the days of ignorance'.<sup>1</sup> He is reported to have followed the Jewish and Christian traditions in cases where there was no provision in the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding many customs and usages being amended or even abolished, a large number of them were retained and assimilated into Islamic faith. The toleration (taqrīr) - a kind of ḥadīth signifying the tacit approval of the Prophet of the actions of his companions-itself implies the recognition of certain prevailing laws by the Prophet.

Having adopted such a policy, the Prophet gained the confidence of the bedouins. At the same time, he went on promulgating the teachings of the Qur'ān introducing thereby many new laws in Arabian

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<sup>1</sup> SB, ii, 340, 348, 350 (Anbiyā'), 381 (Manā'ib).

<sup>2</sup> Shamā'il, 496.

society. When people were prepared to listen to his words and accepted the Qur'ān as a Divine Book, the task of recognition of his own sunna became simpler.

With a declaration in the Qur'ān, "Verily, in the Messenger of Allāh ye have a good example" (Qur'ān, xxxiii:21), the ideality of the sunna which so far had been in the ancient customs, began to be sought in the conduct of the Prophet. Partly because of his own exemplary conduct and partly due to Qur'ānic injunctions to follow the Prophet<sup>1</sup>, his actions and conduct replaced the sunna of their ancestors, of their tribe and that of Allāh - the last mentioned having been incorporated in the 'sunna of Muḥammad'. Since by nature the Arabs were wont to following the sunna, they found no difficulty in shifting to a new one - the 'sunna of Muḥammad'. The nascent Muslim community was soon convinced that the behaviour of the Prophet provided a sunna better than that of the Jāhilīyya.

The Prophet himself insisted that 'his sunna' be followed, and warned; "He who tires of my sunna does not belong to me".<sup>2</sup> This was quite in agreement with the Qur'ānic injunction: "We sent not any Apostle but to be obeyed"<sup>3</sup> and that "He who obeyeth the Messenger obeyeth Allāh"<sup>4</sup>. It was rather a duty to obey the Messenger of Allāh and follow his rulings. Being indispensable for the practical

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 3:32, 132.; 4:59.; 8:20, 46.; 24:56.; 47:33.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, I, ii, 95.; Musnad (Sh), ix, 237-238. Musnad, ii, 124.; SN, vi, 60 (Nikāḥ).; Bagh, iii, 330, where the scribal error (in the isnād) of "Abd Allāh b. 'Umar" should be corrected as "Abd Allāh b. 'Amr."

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 4:64.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 4:80.



application of the Qur'ānic doctrines, the 'sunna of the Prophet' must have necessarily been given a great importance during his lifetime. The practical demonstration was necessary to know the ways and manners of performing rituals ('ibādāt). He did not always explain in words as how to perform ablution; instead he demonstrated the act. Similarly, he demonstrated the act of prayer and said, "Ṣallū kamā ra'aytumunī usallī"<sup>1</sup> (Pray in the manner you see me praying). The same happened in other religious, moral and social matters; and his overall conduct - later named as 'sunna of the Prophet' - came to be regarded as a model to be followed by the Muslim Community.

This concept became so popular among the muslims that in later times the use of 'sunna' alone indicated the 'sunna of the Prophet'.<sup>2</sup> Here we quote a few instances to illustrate this point:

Ibn 'Abbās was once entertaining people with 'nabīdh'.<sup>3</sup> When a person asked if he was serving that drink because it was 'sunna' or he preferred to serve this particular drink out of his own liking. Ibn 'Abbās, instead of giving a direct reply to this question, quoted an incident from the Prophet's behaviour. He informed the questioner that the Prophet not only himself drank nabīdh but had encouraged its use.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn 'Abbās mentioned this incident to show that his act of entertaining with nabīdh was in conformity with the 'sunna of

<sup>1</sup> SE, i, 165 (Adhān).

<sup>2</sup> Tab, IV, i, 114.

<sup>3</sup> Intoxicating beverage made of dates or raisins.; wine.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, II, i, 131.



the Prophet'. He knew that the word 'sunna' in the questioner's remark 'if it was sunna?' referred to the 'sunna of the Prophet'. He, therefore, quoted an incident from the Prophet's behaviour. It is thus clear that the word 'sunna' (without an affix) referred to here, signifies the 'sunna of the Prophet'.

To take another example, the caliph 'Umar once asked the barber to remove the hairs from his chest. The companions around him, who usually sought in his character the 'sunna of the Prophet', looked at this act curiously. Lest they had treated this act of 'Umar as 'sunna of the Prophet', he clarified the situation, saying "O people, verily, it is not the sunna."<sup>1</sup> The word 'sunna' used here clearly refers to the 'sunna of the Prophet'.

Although the usual expression to denote the normative behaviour of the Prophet was the 'sunna of the Messenger of Allāh', yet very often the term 'sunna' was used without its genitive. Before we turn to the early usage of the term 'sunna of the Prophet', we cite below a few examples where the term 'sunna' alone referred to the 'sunna of the Prophet':

(i) The Prophet is reported to have said, "The faith has settled in the hearts of men whereby they learn the Qur'ān and the sunna".<sup>2</sup>

(ii) Abū Yūsuf laid down the principle that a ḥadīth to be accepted must conform to the Qur'ān and the sunna.<sup>3</sup>

(iii) In an instruction given by 'Umar to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī,

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, III, i, 209.

<sup>2</sup> SB, iv, 420 (I'tisām)

<sup>3</sup> Siyar, 31.

the former is reported to have advised the latter to resort to analogy (qiyās) in matters which were not found in the Book or the sunna.<sup>1</sup>

(vi) The poet al-Kumayt, in one of his poems, says, "On the basis of what Book or which sunna (bi ayyi kitābin aw bi ayyati sunnatin) do you regard my love for them (progeny of the Prophet) as disgrace?"<sup>2</sup>

(v) It is reported that Ibn 'Abbās used to put shackles in the feet of 'Ikrima to teach him the Qur'ān and the sunna.<sup>3</sup>

(vi) Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ is reported to have been sent by the Prophet to the Yemenites to teach them the sunna and al-Islām.<sup>4</sup>

In all the examples cited above, the word 'sunna' refers to the 'sunna of the Prophet' only and nothing else. This shows that 'sunna' in the sense of 'sunna of the Prophet' was a well-established usage of the time.

That 'sunna' (without an affix) referred to the 'sunna of the Prophet' is implied in the following example as well.

It is reported that the Prophet, at the conclusion of the battle of Uhud, came out searching for Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's body. When ultimately he found it at the bottom of the valley, he discovered that it was badly mutilated. Enraged at this sight he spoke out: "Were it not that Ṣafīyya (Ḥamza's sister) would be painfully

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<sup>1</sup> Hujaj, (Sh), 212.

<sup>2</sup> Methodology, 8, where Fazlur Raḥmān gives reasons why 'sunna' here can mean only 'sunna of the Prophet' and nothing else.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, V, 212.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, III, i, 299.

grieved and lest it become a sunna, I would have left his body as it is till it was eaten by wild animals and birds...."<sup>1</sup>

The word 'sunna' in this report is very significant, for the Prophet himself uses it in the sense of his own practice and is aware that his actions would constitute a precedent for future generation.<sup>2</sup>

So far, we have seen that the term 'sunna' without any genitive, was used in early Islam in the sense of the 'sunna of the Prophet'. Now coming to the usage of the expression 'sunna of the Prophet', we find that its occurrence was equally common in this period, though Joseph Schacht denies this fact.<sup>3</sup>

Schacht holds that the earliest evidence for the use of the term 'sunna of the Prophet' is the letter addressed by the Khārijite leader 'Abd Allāh b. Ibad to the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik about 76/695.<sup>4</sup> Another authentic early evidence for the usage of this

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<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 584.

<sup>2</sup> Guillaume seems to doubt the genuineness of this report (cf. Sīra (Guil), 387,n.). But the fact that the Prophet had shown this careful attitude with regard to his sunna on several occasions suggests the authenticity of this incident too. We have seen elsewhere that he had abstained from drawing himself a bucket of water from the well of Zamzam lest it become a sunna, to be followed by the muslim community, which in turn might deprive the Banu 'l-'Abbās of their privilege of siqāya (supplying the water of Zamzam to the pilgrims). He not only showed his apprehension by his act but also expressed it in words, saying, 'were it not that it might become a 'sunna', I would have hauled myself (the bucket).' (cf. Tab, II, i, 131.) In fact we find several reports in ḥadīth works, where the Prophet refrained from doing certain acts lest they become 'sunna', to be considered obligatory by the Muslims.

<sup>3</sup> Islamic law, 18.; OMJ, 74. Also see, Early Islam, 131-133, 168-169 for refutation of this view by Bravmann.

<sup>4</sup> Islamic law, 18.

expression, according to him, is its occurrence in the treatise which Ḥasan al-Baṣrī addressed to the same caliph.<sup>1</sup>

But contrary to Schacht's findings we come across this expression much earlier, even during the Prophet's lifetime. We quote below a few examples to show that the phrase 'sunna of the Prophet' and other equivalent terms were in use right from the time of the Prophet:

- (i) At the time of Mu'adh's appointment as a judge in Yemen, when the Prophet asked him as how he would decide the cases, he replied, "I shall decide them on the basis of the Book of Allāh, (but) in case of non-availability of rulings in the Book of Allāh, (I shall decide them) on the basis of the 'sunna of the Messenger of Allāh...."<sup>2</sup>
- (ii) The Prophet is reported to have said, "I have left you two things; if you adhere to these, you will not go astray. (They are): the Book of Allāh and my practice (sunnatī)."<sup>3</sup>

In fact the Prophet has used this term a number of times.<sup>4</sup>

Almost all the canonical works contain the reports where the Prophet refers to his own 'sunna'.<sup>5</sup>

- (iii) The Prophet is reported to have said, "you must follow 'my sunna' (sunnatī) and the 'sunna of the rightly guided caliphs'. Hold

<sup>1</sup> Islamic law, 18.

<sup>2</sup> SD, (Med.), i, 55.; Bayān, ii, 56.; This report appears suspect to Jawzqānī, who mentions it under mawḍū'āt (forged traditions), but Ibn al-Qayyim defends it. Ghazālī, considering it authentic unequivocally declares in al-Mustasfā: "The ḥadīth of Mu'adh has been accepted by the Umma." (cf. Abbās Ḥamāda, As-sunnat an-Nabawiyya... (Cairo, 1384/1965), p. 188).

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, ii, 180.; Iṣbahān, i, 103.

<sup>4</sup> Sīra, 969.; Papyri, ii, 23, n.; Kifāya, 603.; SAD, iv, 281 (Sunna), ḥadīth no. 4607.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad, ii, 124.; SH, vi, 60, (Nikāḥ).; SAD, iv, 281 (Sunna), ḥadīth no. 4607. SII, i, 20 (Introduction), 567 (Nikāḥ).

to it and stick fast to it."<sup>1</sup>

(iv) In a sermon given on the occasion of 'Īd al-Aḡḡā, the Prophet said, inter alia, "we offer the prayers and sacrifice (the animals); so whoever does that, acts in accordance with our sunna (sunnatana)"<sup>2</sup>

(v) In one of the Friday sermons, 'Umar is reported to have said, "I have appointed governors in different places to teach people their religion and the 'sunna of their Prophet (sunnat nabīyyihim)".<sup>3</sup>

(vi) On the occasion of the choice of a caliph after the death of 'Umar in 23 A.H., 'Abd ar-Raḥmān interviewed 'Uthmān and 'Alī - the prospective candidates for the caliphate - and asked them if they were ready "to hold fast to the 'Book of Allāh' and the 'sunna of His prophet' (Kitāb Allāh wa sunnat nabīyyihī)".<sup>4</sup>

(vii) 'Uthmān in his first speech after becoming the caliph said, "I am answerable to you (O people) for three things next to the 'Book of Allāh' and the 'sunna of His prophet' (ba'da kitāb Allāh wa sunnat nabīyyihī)".<sup>5</sup>

(viii) When 'Uthmān was elected as Caliph, the people paid allegiance to him in these words: "We pay allegiance to you on (condition that you would follow) the 'Book of Allāh' and, the 'sunna of His prophet' and the practice of Abū Bakr and 'Umar (alā kitāb Allāh wa sunnat nabīyyihī wa fi'l Abī Bakr wa 'Umar)".<sup>6</sup>

(ix) In one of his long speeches, 'Alī is reported to have said, "(I invite you) O people, to the Book of Allāh Almighty and the 'sunna of your prophet' (sunnat nabīyyikum)".<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ma'ālim, iv, 300.; Bayān, ii, 182.; Jāmi', x, 144 ('Ilm).

<sup>2</sup> SN, iii, 182 (Ṣalāt al-Īdayn).

<sup>3</sup> Kharāj, 14, 115.; Methodology, 8-9, where Fazlur Raḥman gives circumstantial evidences to show the genuineness of the statement of 'Umar.

<sup>4</sup> Annales, i, 2793-2794.

<sup>5</sup> Annales, i, 3058.

<sup>6</sup> Annales, i, 2794.

<sup>7</sup> 'Uyūn (Akh), ii, 236.

- (x) When 'Alī punished an adultress with stoning, he justified his act by saying, "I have stoned her in accordance with the 'sunna of the Messenger of Allāh' (bisunnat rasūl Allāh)"<sup>1</sup>
- (xi) In the treaty concluded between Ḥasan and Mu'āwiya, the former agreed to assign the caliphate to Mu'āwiya on condition that he would act in accordance with the 'Book of God', the 'sunna of the Prophet' and the 'behaviour of the good caliphs'.<sup>2</sup>
- (xii) Yazīd b. al-Muhallab is reported as summoning the people of Basra to the 'Book of God' and the 'sunna of His prophet'.<sup>3</sup>
- (xiii) In the oath of allegiance to 'Abd al-Malik, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar is reported as saying, "I swear to obey the servant of God, 'Abd al-Malik, according to the 'sunna of Allāh' and the 'sunna of the Prophet'...."<sup>4</sup>
- (xiv) In his famous letter to Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm, 'Umar II asks the former to "look for the ḥadīth and 'sunna of the Prophet'...." and commit the same to writing.<sup>5</sup>
- (xv) In his letter to 'Urwa b. az-Zubayr, 'Umar II explains the bases of jurisprudence and mentions the 'sunna of the Messenger of Allāh' as the second source of Islamic law.<sup>6</sup>
- (xvi) The phrase 'sunna of the Prophet' along with the 'Book of Allāh' occurs in 'Umar II's inscription in the mosque of the Prophet.<sup>7</sup>
- (xvii) In one of his statements, 'Umar II says, "No one is allowed

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<sup>1</sup> SB, iv, 300 (Ḥudūd).

<sup>2</sup> Bihār, x, 124.

<sup>3</sup> Annales, ii, 1391-1392.

<sup>4</sup> SB, iv, 402 (Aḥkām), 419 (I'tisām...)

<sup>5</sup> Muwatta' (Sh), 389.; Amwāl, 578.; SD, i, 126.; Tab, II, ii, 134.; VIII, 353.; Taqyid, 105.; Hawālik, i, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Bayān, ii, 24.

<sup>7</sup> Papyri, ii, 23.

to give his own opinion when there is a verdict in the Book. 'The opinions of the imāms (scholars) are accepted only when there is no verdict either in the Qur'ān or in the 'sunna of the Prophet'."<sup>1</sup>

(xix) With regard to a question of inheritance, Mālik is reported to have said, "There is nothing for you in the 'Book of Allāh' and we do not know if there is anything for you in the 'sunna of the Messenger of Allāh'."<sup>2</sup>

(xx) In his letter to 'Abd al-Malik, 'Abd Allāh b. Ibād (d. 86 A.H.) refers to 'the sunna of the Prophet' and the 'sunna of the preceeding caliphs', and praises Abū Bakr for following the 'Book of Allāh' and the 'sunna of the Prophet'.<sup>3</sup>

(xxi) In his letter to 'Abd al-Malik, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī extolls the forebears and says, "They acted according to the ordinances of God, narrated His wisdom, and followed the 'sunna of the Messenger of Allāh'....."<sup>4</sup>

(xxii) Abū Yūsuf advises the caliph Hārūn ar-Rashīd to instruct his officials, among other things, to administer according to the 'sunna of the Prophet'.<sup>5</sup>

(xxiii) Explaining his viewpoint regarding juristic problems, Abū Yūsuf says that in legal matters one should follow the 'sunna of the Prophet' and 'of the forebears: the companions and the fuqahā'.<sup>6</sup>

The examples cited above clearly show that the term 'sunna of

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<sup>1</sup> SD, i, 114. .

<sup>2</sup> Muwatta', 513.

<sup>3</sup> Jawāhir, 157, 160, 164-166.

<sup>4</sup> Der Islam, XXI (1933), p. 68.

<sup>5</sup> Kharāj, 76.

<sup>6</sup> Siyar, 24. .



the Prophet' was already in use in the first generation of Islam. During the lifetime of the Prophet, the common expression for his ideal practices was 'sunna' alone or 'sunnatī' or 'sunnatunā' - the last mentioned referring to the practices of the prophets in general. The expression 'sunna of the Prophet' became popular after his death.

As regards the scope of the 'sunna of Muḥammad', it appears to be wider than that of 'sunna of Allāh'. While the former covers both revealed and traditional customary laws of Muslims, the latter deals only with revealed ones and hence limited in scope. Furthermore, the 'sunna of Muḥammad' deals with every detail of the individual's life, both secular and religious, revealed and unrevealed alike. It would not be wrong, therefore, to hold that the Qur'ānic laws have been incorporated in the 'sunna of Muḥammad' and the former have to be read along with the ḥadīth - the record of Muḥammad's sunna. Probably, this very idea led to the belief that the Qur'ān is more in need of the sunna than the sunna is of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup>

(iv) 'Regional Sunna':-

The sunna of the Prophet was initially known to the companions and successors living in Medina and its neighbouring cities. When these people moved to different provinces of the Muslim Empire, they carried with them the sunna of the Prophet. Wherever they went and settled down, they were received with great honour by the zealous Muslims who were eager to know more and more about the sunna of the Prophet. Some of these bearers of sunna established schools of their own. They were treated authorities on the Prophet's sunna and were

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<sup>1</sup> SD, (Med.), i, 117.



known as scholars. Several such schools were thus established in the middle of the second century after the hijra. These scholars sometimes differed on legal issues. The interpretation of the term 'sunna', thus, varied from centre to centre. Local scholars of different places believed that their own sunna i.e. the sunna of their respective regions represented the real 'sunna of the Prophet'. The fact that different practices were followed in different places shows that the phrases like 'As-sunna 'indana' (this is our practice) and 'madat as-sunna' (this has been the practice) referred to the local practices rather than the practice of the whole community. This we call 'regional sunna'.

The reputed scholars of this early period, Imām Mālik, Abū Yūsuf and al-Awzā'ī, have used the term 'sunna' in the sense of regional practices of Medina, Iraq and Syria respectively.

(i) Imām Mālik: Mālik uses the word 'sunna' to denote the 'practice prevalent in Medina'. He distinguishes it from the ḥadīth and is of the opinion that the 'sunna' (practice of Medina) is more reliable than the 'ḥadīth'.<sup>1</sup> He, very often, confirms the reported ḥadīth by mentioning the sunna prevalent in Medina. In case of contradiction between the two he prefers the latter over the former. He quotes for instance, a tradition according to which a pilgrimage by proxy is allowed whether the beneficiary on whose behalf it is performed is alive or dead.<sup>2</sup> But following the practice of Medina, he does not allow such a pilgrimage on behalf of a living person.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, according to ḥadīth 'walking in front of the person

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<sup>1</sup> For distinction between 'sunna' and 'ḥadīth', see infra, chapter II, pp. 85-92.

<sup>2</sup> Muwatta', (Sh) - (D), 138.

<sup>3</sup> Hujaj (LS.), 162.

praying is not allowed'. But "according to sunna" (Medinese practice), says Mālik, "there is no harm in doing so."<sup>1</sup>

Mālik seldom cares about the practice (sunna) of other cities, for he considers Medina as the 'home of sunna'. In his letter to Imām al-Layth b. Sa'd of Egypt he advances several arguments in support of this view. The basic point that he puts forth is that the people of Medina were more acquainted with the sunna of the Prophet than the people of other cities.

It should be remarked that his preference of Medinese practice was shared by the consensus of the scholars of Medina and was not merely his own personal ijtihād. For instance, he first remarks that commercial goods of the 'people of the Book' and the Magians were not taxable, as had been the practice in the past (maḍat bidhālīka 's-sunna).<sup>2</sup> Then he justifies it by saying, "This is what I found to be the practice of the scholars of my town." The word 'sunna' used by Mālik here clearly refers to the practice prevalent in Medina and approved by Medinese scholars.

At another place, Mālik says that zakāt is obligatory on a man who is in possession of twenty dīnars, and adds, "This is the 'sunna' about which they (i.e. the scholars of Medina) do not differ."<sup>3</sup>

Shāfi'ī quotes a statement of Mālik where the latter uses the

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<sup>1</sup> Muwatta' (Sh) - (D), 152.

<sup>2</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), ii, 143.

<sup>3</sup> Muwatta', i, 280.

term 'sunna' in the sense of Medinese practice. He (Shāfi'ī) says, "Do you not agree (O interlocutor) that he (Mālik) would not say: "This is our practice (hādhihī 's-sunna 'indanā) unless the matter had been agreed upon among the scholars of Medina."<sup>1</sup>

We come across a number of phrases in Mālik's Muwatta' which denote the local practice of Medina. The usual plan followed by Mālik in this book is this that first he reports a certain tradition and then adds one of several terms which connote the prevalent practice of Medina. The expressions commonly used to convey this sense are: 'Al-amr 'indanā'<sup>2</sup>, 'Al-amr alladhī lā ikhtilāf fīhi 'indanā'<sup>3</sup>, 'As-sunna 'indanā'<sup>4</sup>, 'Maḍat as-sunna'<sup>5</sup> and 'As-sunnat allatī lā ikhtilāf fihā 'indanā'<sup>6</sup>.

It is clear from these and similar other expressions that the Medinese practice in many cases differed from the reported traditions, and that the former was preferred by Mālik over the latter. It is also implied that the practice of one region differed from that of the other and that 'sunna' in above phrases referred to the practice of Medina. It proves, therefore, that 'sunna' was used by Mālik in a parochial sense. Thus we may call this sunna 'a regional sunna'.

(ii) Abū Yūsuf:- Abu Yūsuf, the contemporary of Mālik, asks us to "make the Qur'ān and the 'recognised practice' (as-sunnat al-ma'rūfa)

<sup>1</sup> Risāla, 142. .

<sup>2</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), ii, 107, 123, et passim.

<sup>3</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), ii, 101 and passim.

<sup>4</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), ii, 105, 124, et passim.

<sup>5</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), ii, 141, 143, et passim.

<sup>6</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), ii, 97, et passim.

as our imām and guide."<sup>1</sup> His advice to make the Qur'ān as our guide seems quite understandable, but what does the 'sunnat ma'rūfa' signify here? Apparently, it seems to mean that the practices of the Muslim community, whether of Iraq - Abū Yūsuf's home town - or of outside, is legitimate and worth emulating. It appears, therefore, that, unlike Mālik, Abū Yūsuf's 'sunna' is not parochial.

But viewed in historical perspective, Abū Yūsuf's 'sunna' is not much different from the regional 'sunna' of Mālik. We know that in Abū Yūsuf's time, different schools of thought prevailed in different places, each claiming their own standpoint as genuine. Therefore, the term 'as-sunnat al-ma'rūfa' would mean the practice prevalent in Abū Yūsuf's own <sup>land</sup> ~~town~~ viz Iraq. This would, therefore bring him in line with Imām Mālik.

Abū Yūsuf also uses the expressions 'the practice (sunna) of men of learning',<sup>2</sup> and 'practice (sunna) of leaders of the Muslims',<sup>3</sup> to refer to the practice (sunna) of his own town.

(iii) Awzā'ī:- Syrian, Al-Awzā'ī uses the term 'sunna' in the same sense in which his contemporaries, Mālik and Abū Yūsuf, have used it. He uses the expression, 'it had been the practice (sunna) of the Muslims in the past'.<sup>4</sup> It seems that the practice referred to by Al-Awzā'ī is a continuation of the Prophetic sunna as practiced in Muslim communities in different parts of the Muslim Empire. But actually

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<sup>1</sup> Hujaj, 32.

<sup>2</sup> Hujaj, 41.

<sup>3</sup> Hujaj, 41.

<sup>4</sup> Hujaj, 53, 76.

what he means by 'sunna' is the 'practice prevalent in his own region' viz Syria. When he says, "hādhā ra'y ahl al-'ilm"<sup>1</sup> (this is the opinion of the scholars), he actually refers to the scholars of his own region.

A debate between al-Awzā'ī and Abū Yūsuf on allotting the share of booty to riders of ponies (barādhīn) in the war, clearly shows that 'sunna' to Awzā'ī was the practice prevalent in Syria. Awzā'ī in this dialogue says that 'the leaders of the muslims in the past did not give the share of booty to barādhīn...' Refuting his argument, Abū Yūsuf remarks that the statement of al-Awzā'ī is the opinion of some such scholars of Syria who cannot even perform their ablution properly; neither can they recite the formula of tashahhud well, nor do they know the principles of fiqh...<sup>2</sup>

From Abū Yūsuf's refutation - made in a polemical manner - of Awzā'ī's claim, it appears that the practice (sunna) referred by the latter was unknown in Iraq. Had it been the practice in all the regions, Abū Yūsuf would have endorsed the views of Al-Awzā'ī. This, in turn proves that (sunna) to Awzā'ī usually referred to the prevalent practices in Syria.

On the basis of the examples cited above, it can be safely said that the well known scholars of the second century after the hijra used the term 'sunna' in the sense of 'regional sunna'.

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<sup>1</sup> Hujaj, 49.

<sup>2</sup> Hujaj, 20-21..

(v) 'Sunna of the Community' - Islamic Sunna:

In 'Islamic sunna' we include the established religious practices that are either generally followed in the religious life of the Muslim community or considered desirable among orthodox Muslims. Under 'desirable practices' come those practices of the Prophet and the Pious Caliphs which concern the minute details of their everyday life, like the ways and manners of eating, drinking and social intercourse.

The scope of 'sunna' had been widening ever since the advent of Islam. In the beginning it was confined to 'Muhammad's sunna' which included not only the new laws given by him but also the prevailing customs of his period as well. After his death, it meant the practices of his companions<sup>1</sup> and the successors<sup>2</sup> as well. Thereafter the ijtihāds of the rightly guided caliphs came to be considered as 'sunna' and formed part of religious practices of the Muslims at large. Later, the practices introduced by the Umayyad Caliphs were also included into the scope of 'Islamic sunna'.

'Islamic sunna', in the beginning was nothing more than the Prophet's teachings and his model behaviour. 'Prophet's sunna' as we have seen, was not a total substitute for the customary practices. Many of the ancient usages of the community were retained by Islam. As a matter of fact the maxim 'everything that is not prohibited is permissible'<sup>3</sup> can be easily applied to this period of history. The Prophet himself followed, for sometimes, the custom

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<sup>1</sup> Traditions, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Mughīth, 12. .

<sup>3</sup> This is said to have its basis in the Qur'ān which says, "Lawful unto you are all beyond those mentioned" (4:24) and "He hath explained unto you that which is forbidden unto you" (6:120).

of the Jews<sup>1</sup>, and asked his companions to follow the practices of Jews and Christians in matters in which there was no provision in Muslim law.

That 'Islamic sunna' was not totally divorced from customary practices of Arabia can be clearly seen in the Hajj ceremonies. We notice that there is not much difference between the pagan pilgrimage and the Islamic Hajj. The rites of circumambulation of Ka'ba<sup>2</sup>, kissing the black stone<sup>3</sup>, sacrificing the animals<sup>4</sup>, throwing of pebbles<sup>5</sup>, running between Safā and Marwa<sup>6</sup>, and shaving the head<sup>7</sup>, were among various rites of the pagan pilgrimage which were included in the Islamic Hajj.

Besides the Hajj rites, there were many pre-Islamic Arab beliefs and customs which were incorporated into Islamic religion. As regards belief, the bedouins believed in 'Life hereafter'<sup>8</sup>, and 'al-Hisāb'<sup>9</sup> - the two fundamental beliefs of the Islamic faith. Among the religious practices may be enumerated the batheing of the deceased<sup>10</sup>, wrapping the body in a shroud<sup>11</sup>, offering funeral service<sup>12</sup> and burying it in the grave.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. praying towards Jerusalem till the revelation came to face the Ka'ba instead (cf. Nihāya, i, 329.)

<sup>2</sup> Asnām, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Luhabbar, 311.

<sup>4</sup> Asnām, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Luhabbar, 319.

<sup>6</sup> Luhabbar, 311.

<sup>7</sup> Asnām, 46.

<sup>8</sup> Luhabbar, 322.

<sup>9</sup> Luhabbar, 322.

<sup>10</sup> Luhabbar, 319.

<sup>11</sup> Luhabbar, 321.

<sup>12</sup> Luhabbar, 321.

<sup>13</sup> Luhabbar, 321.



Ibn Ḥabīb has mentioned ten practices<sup>1</sup> concerning purification (tahāra) which were commonly observed in pre-Islamic times.

These practices were later taken into Islam and have been categorised as obligatory (fard) or recommended (mustahab) by later jurists.

Apart from these practices, many legal provisions in connection with marriage<sup>2</sup>, divorce<sup>3</sup> and inheritance<sup>4</sup> etc. have been taken in Muslim law from the practices of the Jāhiliyya period.

These practices have been incorporated into Islam either in toto or with slight modification. Thus, the 'Islamic sunna' in the Prophet's lifetime consisted of the pre-Islamic customs retained by Islam, plus the new 'sunna' introduced by the Prophet and followed by the community.

The 'Islamic sunna' was in fact the established religious practices of the community. It was usually expressed by the phrases 'jarat bihī 's-sunna', and 'madat bihī 's-sunna' and other similar terms.<sup>5</sup> The following are some of the examples where such expressions have been used in the above sense:

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<sup>1</sup> Muḥabbar, 329. The practices mentioned are: (i) Rinsing the mouth (madnada), (ii) cleansing the nostrils (istinshāq), (iii) cleaning the teeth (as-siwāk), (iv) splitting apart the hairs of the beard while making ablution (takhlīl al-lihya), (v) clipping the moustaches (qass ash-shawārib), (vi) circumcision (al-khatān), (vii) shaving the hairs from pubes (halq al-ʿāna), (viii) Plucking hairs from armpits (natf al-ibt), (ix) clipping nails (taglīm al-Azfār) and (x) Purification after excretion (al-Istinjā).

<sup>2</sup> Muḥabbar, 310.

<sup>3</sup> Muḥabbar, 309.

<sup>4</sup> Muḥabbar, 236.

<sup>5</sup> Sīra, 692-693.; Umm, vii, 306.; Amwāl, 612.





(i) When asked about the rules regarding accepting the jizya from idol worshippers, Zuhri is reported to have said, "It was customary (madat as-sunna) to accept this tax from the Christians and Jews of Arabia".<sup>1</sup> The formula 'madat as-sunna' in the report clearly indicates that the given practice was generally accepted and established among the muslim community and hence we call it the 'Islamic sunna'.

(ii) Discussing a certain rite of hajj, Ibn Hishām reports: "When he (the Prophet) made the farewell pilgrimage, he adhered to it (the rite) whereby it became an established practice (madat as-sunna) (among the muslim community)".<sup>2</sup> The phrase 'madat as-sunna' used here refers to the practice of muslims in general. Hence it can be called the 'Islamic sunna'.

(iii) Referring to a practice adopted by the Prophet in distributing the booty of Banū Qurayza, Ibn Ishāq says, "And this remained the usual practice (of the muslim community) with respect to the campaigns (wa madat as-sunna fi'l-maghāzī)."<sup>3</sup> Shāfi'ī also refers to this incident and reports that the followers of Awzā'ī said, 'it had been the established practice (wa bihādha madat as-sunna)...and the muslims had no disagreement about it'.<sup>4</sup> This last remark of the followers of Awzā'ī, as quoted by Shāfi'ī, clearly indicates that the phrase indicated the 'Islamic sunna'.

In fact the age of the companions after the death of the Prophet had brought a slight change in the meaning of 'sunna'. At this

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<sup>1</sup> Amwāl, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 789.

<sup>3</sup> Sīra, 692-693.

<sup>4</sup> Umm, vii, 306.

period, the scope of 'sunna' widened and included not only the pre-Islamic customs and the Prophet's newly introduced sunna, but also the behaviour and conduct of his companions, especially of the pious caliphs. The companions were very careful in preserving the 'sunna of the Prophet' and had regulated their lives accordingly. The people considered these companions as custodians of Prophetic sunna. They had won the confidence of the community because of their love and devotion towards the sunna of the Prophet. Because of their proximity to the age of the Prophet, they were regarded as the true bearers of the latter's sunna. They were rightly regarded so, for they had been very cautious and critical in accepting the reports, claimed to have emanated from the Prophet. The information received by them was put to severe test to be verified and accepted as genuine. Abū Bakr, for instance, agreed to give (from the property of the deceased) one-sixth share to grandmother only when he was convinced that the Prophet had acted so.<sup>1</sup> 'Umar adopted the same attitude with regard to accepting an alleged sunna. It is reported that once Abū Mūsā al-Ashārī called on 'Umar. He knocked at his door three times. Finding no reply from inside he intended to go back whereupon 'Umar came out and saw him returning. He called him back and asked why he was going away. Abū Mūsā replied that he had heard the Prophet saying: "If a man comes and knocks at somebody's door three times but gets no reply, he should not wait any longer". The ḥadīth quoted by Abū Mūsā was not known to 'Umar. In order to verify this - because it contained a 'sunna of the Prophet' - he threatened to punish Abū Mūsā if he failed to produce a witness to confirm the report. The latter therefore, produced an ear-witness to confirm the report. Only then could his report be considered as genuine<sup>2</sup>. Similarly,

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<sup>1</sup> Ma'rifat, 15..

<sup>2</sup> Fdh, i, 6.; 33, iv, 438 (I'tisām...).

the practice of 'Alī was to accept a report only when given on oath.<sup>1</sup> Thus we find that the caliphs had their own ways of examining the reported traditions. They were hesitant to accept a ḥadīth till it was critically examined and genuinely proved.

Considering this cautious attitude of the pious caliphs towards the preservation of the Prophet's sunna, the later muslims took for granted that the practices of the companions must have necessarily conformed to the 'sunna of the Prophet'. It was probably because of this reason that in later times it was deemed enough to ascribe a certain practice to the pious companions so as to bring it at par with the 'sunna of the Prophet'. In this way, even personal opinions (based on the Qur'ān and the Prophet's sunna) in due course became the ijmā' (consensus) of the community and assumed the status of 'Islamic sunna'.<sup>2</sup> It is to this type of 'Islamic sunna' that 'Alī refers in the following statement: "The Messenger of Allāh used to award forty stripes (as a punishment for drinking wine), Abū Bakr (also awarded) forty stripes and 'Umar (awarded) eighty stripes. All this is 'sunna'."<sup>3</sup> 'Alī's comment 'all this is sunna' is very significant, for it shows that even the practice of the companions constituted a 'sunna' - the Islamic sunna.

Hasan b. Muhammad b. 'Alī b: Abī Tālib also seems to refer by

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<sup>1</sup> Ma'rifat, 15..

<sup>2</sup> Nazrat 'Amma, 116.

<sup>3</sup> Kharāj, 99.; Technical terms, i, 707.

'sunna' the 'Islamic sunna' when he says, "whosoever repudiated Abū Bakr and 'Umar has in fact repudiated the 'sunna'."<sup>1</sup>

That 'sunna' of the companions' also constituted the 'Islamic sunna' is evident from the following statement of 'Umar: Commenting upon the institution of appointing a successor, he is reported to have said, "If I appoint a successor, it will be a 'sunna' and if I do not appoint a successor, it will be a 'sunna' (too). The Prophet died without appointing a successor and Abū Bakr died after appointing a successor."<sup>2</sup> In other words, in either case he has a precedent in 'sunna'.

We notice in the above report that the practice of Abū Bakr has been described by 'Umar as 'sunna', which shows that the 'Islamic sunna' was comprised of the practices of the Prophet and the pious caliphs.

The reason why the sunna introduced by the caliphs were incorporated in the scope of Islamic sunna is the fact that the community had full confidence that the caliphs were true devotees of Islam, who were, in no circumstance, prepared to neglect the sunna of the Prophet. However, in certain cases when these caliphs gave juristic rulings contrary to the known sunna, people refused to accept it until they were convinced that the change was brought in good faith and was in conformity with the spirit of the sunna of the Prophet. To take an example, the sale of slave-mothers (Ummahāt al-awlād) was allowed during the Prophet's time. When 'Umar came to

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<sup>1</sup> Lashāhīr, 62, no. 421.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, III, i, 248.; Annales, iii, 241.

power, he exercised his own ijtihād and forbade such transaction.<sup>1</sup> In this way he changed the 'sunna of the Prophet' and established a new one. His action was approved by the community because his motive was good; he had taken a step towards abolition of slavery - one of the main aims of the Prophet. Since this change was in conformity with the spirit of the Prophet's sunna, it was approved by the community and was incorporated into the 'Islamic sunna'.

The practices introduced by other caliphs were also included in the scope of sunna and enlarged thereby its scope. Caliph 'Uthmān, for instance, introduced the third call (first in the words of Abū Ḥanīfa) in Friday prayers<sup>2</sup>, which now forms part of the Islamic sunna. Similarly, caliph 'Umar's Awwaliyyāt, like prescribing of eighty lashes as punishment for drinking and his legislation that the triple divorce in one pronouncement (sitting) to be considered as equivalent to three pronouncements, are some of the examples to show that the 'Islamic sunna' is an extension of the 'Prophetic sunna'.

To take one more example, it is reported that up to the time of the Umayyad Caliph Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, the sermon (khutba) of 'Īdayn was delivered after the prayer. When this caliph noticed that many people leave the mosque without listening to the sermon, he introduced a new system. He started reading out the khutba before the prayer.<sup>3</sup> With the introduction of this sunna, the old practice of delivering khutba after the prayer was forsaken in

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<sup>1</sup> Āthār, 192.

<sup>2</sup> Luwatta' (Sh). - (D), 138.

<sup>3</sup> Āthār, 59.

favour of the new one. Thus the 'Islamic sunna' incorporated the newly introduced practice.

'Sunna', occurring in the phrase 'Ahl as-sunna wa'l-jamā'a' (the people of the sunna and of the community), though used against those of Shī'a (the partisans of 'Alī), actually refers to the followers of the 'Islamic sunna' referred to above. Thus by 'sunnīs' or 'Ahl as-sunna' is meant the 'general body of orthodox Muslims who adhered to the usage of the community'.<sup>1</sup> Today, it is used to refer to one of the four non-Shī'ite groups - Ḥanafite, Shāfi'ite, Mālikite and Ḥanbalite - who, in real sense, are the followers of the 'Islamic sunna'.

(vi) 'Juristic Sunna' - Sunna in Islamic Jurisprudence:

In the fich literature, 'sunna' acquires a technical meaning. In its pure technical sense, it means a recommended act, the observance of which entitles a reward and the omission attaches no blame. It is used in contrast to fard or wājib, meaning obligatory.<sup>2</sup>

The muslim jurists divide all religious actions into the following five categories:

- (i) 'Fard' or 'wājib', meaning 'obligatory'.;
- (ii) 'Mandūb', 'sunna', 'nafl' or 'mustahab', meaning 'recommended', or 'meritorious'.
- (iii) 'Jā'iz' or 'mubah', meaning 'permitted', or 'indifferent'.
- (iv) 'Makrūh', meaning 'disliked' or 'disapproved', and
- (v) 'Ḥarām', meaning 'forbidden'.

<sup>1</sup> Mohammedanism, 74.; Intellectual, 80, 90, where the author says: "By about 800... many Muslims were speaking of themselves as the people of the Sunna."

<sup>2</sup> Asmā', II, i, 156.; Radd al-Mukhtār, i, 72. The distinction between 'sunna' and 'wājib' has been drawn by Sunnī and Shī'ī jurists alike. (cf. Kāfi, i, 71.; Khifā, ii, 141.)

As appears from the above classification, 'sunna' falls in the second category, where it implies the religious practices which are not obligatory, such as the sacrifice of animals<sup>1</sup>, the lesser pilgrimage ('Umra)<sup>2</sup> and taking bath on Fridays etc.<sup>3</sup> In itself, this 'juristic sunna' is divided into two main broad divisions:

(a) 'Sunan al-hudā', 'sunnat muwakkada' or 'sunnat 'Ādiya', i.e. the 'sunna' whose neglect is considered blameworthy, as, for example, the neglect of congregational prayer.<sup>4</sup>

(b) 'Sunan az-Zawā'id', i.e. the 'sunna' whose neglect ~~does~~ <sup>is not</sup> ~~considered blameworthy.~~ <sup>not amount to dislike.</sup><sup>5</sup> In this category of sunna fall the habits of the Prophet in his dress, residence etc.

It should be pointed out in this connection that although the concepts under the above terms were in existence from earliest times, the formulation of technical terms with accurate connotation took place much later. "The five categories as such are as yet unknown to Shāfi'ī and his predecessors", says Schacht.<sup>6</sup> In earlier times, alternative expressions were used to express the meaning underlying these terms. Very often long sentences were used for what could, in later times, be expressed by a word or two.

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<sup>1</sup> Muwatta', 487.

<sup>2</sup> Muwatta', 347.; Hujaj (Sh), 143.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 592.

<sup>4</sup> Nazrat 'Āmma, 120.; Technical terms, 704.; SM, i, 249,n.

<sup>5</sup> Nazrat 'Āmma, 120.; Technical terms, 704.; SM, i, 249,n.

<sup>6</sup> OMJ, 133.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE SEMANTICS OF ḤADĪTH

#### 1. Literal meaning of ḥadīth:

(i) 'New or 'recent': Etymologically speaking, 'ḥadīth' is derived from the root ḥa da tha, meaning, an occurrence or incident which has recently taken place and which did not exist before.<sup>1</sup> It has two basic meanings viz (i) new or recent as opposed to qadīm, meaning 'old' and (ii) discourse, talk or story.

As for the first meaning, Im Hishām quotes a report where qadīm and ḥadīth occur side by side. He mentions that Rafā'a b. Zayd handed over a letter to Muḥammad (which the latter had written to the former) with this remark: "dūnaka yā rasūl Allāh, qadīman kitābuhu, ḥadīthan ghadruhu (take it O Apostle of God, it was written long since (qadīman) but its violation is recent (ḥadīthan))."<sup>2</sup>

'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd also uses it with its counterpart 'qadīm'. Giving an account of how from the Prophet's behaviour he came to know about the prohibition of greetings during prayer, he reports: "We used to exchange greetings (even) amidst prayer<sup>3</sup>....(but) it so happened that once I called on the Prophet while he was praying; I greeted him but he did not reply. Thereupon I was seized by (gave thought over) what had happened in the past and what has happened now (fa akhadhanī mā qaduma wa mā ḥadutha...)." <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maḥāyīs, ii, 36.; Mukhtār, 142.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 978.

<sup>3</sup> SAD, i, 335 (Ṣalāt), ḥadīth no. 924.

<sup>4</sup> SAD, i, 335 (Ṣalāt), ḥadīth no. 924.



In another report, the Prophet is seen using the term ḥadīth with its counterpart, qadīm, in the same sense. After teaching ten moral precepts to his uncle, he says that if the latter were to act upon them, Allāh would forgive all his sins - former and latter, old and new, intentional and unintentional, minor and grave (awwalahū wa ākhirahū, qadīmahū wa ḥadīthahū, khata'ahū wa 'amadahū, ṣaghīrahū wa kabīrahū).<sup>1</sup> Here, too, the word ḥadīth has been used in the sense of 'new' or 'recent'.

The verb 'aḥdatha', derived from the same root, means 'he originated something new'. For example, in a report regarding 'Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr's addition of a new door in the building of Ka'ba, it is said, "wa aḥdatha fīhi bāban ākhara"<sup>2</sup> i.e. added (or originated) another door in it. To take another example, when, in early Medinan period, Jews saw Muḥammad praying towards Jerusalem, they commented, "Although Muḥammad claims to be a prophet yet we do not see him 'introducing anything new' in his prophethood (mā narāhu aḥdath fī nubūwwatihi shay'an);<sup>3</sup> does he not pray towards our gibla and follow our sunna? (wa yastasannu bi sunnatinā)". Similarly, it is reported that recitation of the Qur'ānic verses during circumambulation was something 'newly introduced' (shay'un uḥditha).<sup>4</sup>

As is evident from the above examples, the verbal form of ḥa da tha has the basic connotation of originality. It means 'performance of an act for the first time, not having been done before'. The

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<sup>1</sup> SAD, ii, 40 (Tatawwu'), ḥadīth no. 1297.

<sup>2</sup> Akhbār, i, 137.

<sup>3</sup> Mihāya, i, 329.

<sup>4</sup> Akhbār, ii, 8.

derivative noun ḥadath, therefore, becomes synonymous with bid'ā, meaning innovation. To take for example, when a father heard his son reciting the 'bismillāh' formula aloud at the beginning of the prayer, he said, "O my son! beware thou, of innovation (yā bunayya iyyāka wa 'l-ḥadath)."<sup>1</sup> As, according to traditional usage, the formula had to be whispered, the father disapproved the act of pronouncing it aloud and called his son's action a ḥadath or innovation.

Although 'aḥdatha', in its literal sense, signifies 'an innovation', yet in context of Islamic jurisprudence, it means 'he created a new rule of law', meaning thereby introduction of a sunna which did not exist before. We quote a few examples to clarify this point.

(i) Ṭabarī reports that when 'Uthmān, the caliph, started exiling the evil doers, the fathers of the exiled youths said, "Nothing originated the procedure of exiling but the Prophet's exiling of al-Ḥakam b. Abī al-ʿĀṣ (mā aḥdatha at-taysīr illā anna rasūl Allāh sayyara al-Ḥakam b. Abī 'l-ʿĀṣ)".<sup>2</sup> Commenting on this passage, Bravmann says, "Special attention should be paid to the use in this passage of the verb aḥdatha, which is a specific term for "creating a sunnah"..."<sup>3</sup>

(ii) Abū Dā'ūd quotes a ḥadīth regarding greetings during prayers (Radd as-salām fī 's-salāt). The report shows that to return greetings during prayer was allowed in the beginning but was later prohibited. Describing the occasion of repealing of this law and of creating a new sunna, the Prophet is reported to have said,

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<sup>1</sup> Jāmi', ii, 43 (Salāt).

<sup>2</sup> Annales, i, 3029.

<sup>3</sup> Early Islam, 162.

"Verily, Allāh renews whichever of His laws He pleases and has (therefore) introduced this new law: 'Do not talk during prayers' (qad aḥdatha min amrihī an lā tukallimū fī 's-salāt)'."<sup>1</sup>

(iii) 'Ā'ishā quotes the Prophet's saying: "man aḥdatha fī amrinā hādha mā laysa minhu fa-huwa riddun" (he who introduces into our cause new things that are not already in essence within it, is reprehensible).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, a son says of the father, "wa lam ara aḥadan min aṣḥāb rasūl Allāh kāna abghaḍ ilayhi 'l-ḥadath fī 'l-islām"<sup>3</sup> i.e. I noticed that no one from amongst the companions of the Messenger of Allāh is more hateful to ḥadath (new laws) than him. Again, in his defence one says, "I have not introduced any ḥadath (new law) in Islam" (mā aḥdathtu fī 'l-islām ḥadathan).<sup>4</sup>

(iv) Referring to the discussion on speculative study in Islam, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, in his letter to 'Abd al-Malik, says, "We are the first to discuss about it (aḥdathnā 'l-kalām fīhī)."<sup>5</sup>

It is clear from the above examples that the word 'ḥadath' indicates 'a thing newly introduced'.

From this meaning, perhaps, the word ḥadath (pl. aḥdāth) came to mean a 'crime' or an 'offence', the implication being that it has been committed for the first time. To take an instance, Azraqī reports that the tribe of 'Amālīq had committed aḥdāth in Mecca for which they were punished by God.<sup>6</sup> By aḥdāth, he meant the 'crimes'

<sup>1</sup> SAD, i, 335 (Salāt), ḥadīth no. 924.

<sup>2</sup> SAD, iv, 280 (Sunna), ḥadīth no. 4606.; Also see Awwāl, 185.

<sup>3</sup> Jāmi', ii, 43, (Salāt).

<sup>4</sup> Ulūm, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Der Islam, XXI, 68.

<sup>6</sup> Akhbār, ii, 106.

which they had committed. In another report, the same Azaqī speaks of the tribe of Jurhumites and says that these people had committed such crimes or offences in their tribe which were unknown to them. For 'crimes' he uses the word ahdāth and says "wa ahdathū fihā ahdāthan lam takun" (they introduced (committed) crimes which had not been committed before.)<sup>1</sup> The word 'hadath' in the sense of 'offence' also occurs in a report found in Ṭabari's Annales. It is reported that at the surrender of Banū Qurayza no woman was killed except the one who had committed an 'offence' (hadathan ahdathat-hu).<sup>2</sup> The offence was that she had poisoned the Prophet.

In fact the word 'hadath' in the sense of 'offence' frequently occurs in the written documents of the Prophet's time, as, for instance, in the peace treaty of Ayla<sup>3</sup> and the Constitution of Medina.<sup>4</sup>

That 'hadath' and 'ahdatha' mean 'an offence' and 'he committed a crime' respectively, can be clearly seen in the following few examples:

Ṭabari reports that Ka'b b. Asad put forward three suggestions to the Jews of Banū Qurayza when they were sure to receive death punishment from the hands of muslims. One of these suggestions was to attack Muḥammad and his party on the Sabbath day (when they did not expect such an attack). The Jews did not agree to it and said, "Are we to committ an offence on this day and do on the Sabbath what

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<sup>1</sup> Akhbār, i, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Annales, i, 1494-1495.

<sup>3</sup> Sīra, 902.; Tab, I, ii, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Sīra, 343.

those before us, of whom you know, did, and were deformed (as a result of their deed) (wa muḥdith fīhi mā lam yakun aḥdatha fīhi man kāna cablanā illā man qad 'alimta fa aṣābahu min al-maskh).<sup>1</sup> According to another report (with slight modification), the reply given by the Jews was in these words: 'Some of us have committed an offence and are met with punishments which is not unknown to you' (wa qad kāna aḥdatha fīhi ba'ḍunā ḥadathan fa aṣābahu mā lam yukhfa 'alaykum).<sup>2</sup>

The verb 'aḥdathnā' (in plural form) in the above sense of committing an offence, occurs in the charter issued by the Prophet to the tribe of 'Abd al-Qays of Baḥrayn.<sup>3</sup> And the word 'muḥdith' (the active participle from 'aḥdatha'), occurring in the constitution of Medina,<sup>4</sup> has been rightly interpreted by Prof. Serjeant as 'criminal'.<sup>5</sup>

In a report found in Ibn Hishām's Sīra, it is said, "Isāf and Nā'ila, a man and a woman (respectively) of (the tribe of) Jurhum, committed an offence (aḥdathā)<sup>6</sup> in the shrine of Ka'ba. As a result of this, Allāh transformed them into two stones."<sup>7</sup>

Again, Mālik reports a tradition where this word occurs in the sense of committing adultery - an offence.<sup>8</sup> The word 'aḥdatha' finds expression also in Ḥassān's poetry. In one of his poems, bewailing

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<sup>1</sup> Annales, i, 1488.

<sup>2</sup> Annales, i, 1482.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 32, 33, 54.; Wathā'iq, no. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Sīra, 342.

<sup>5</sup> Serjeant, "The Constitution of Medina", IQ, VIII, nos. 1 & 2, p. 5

<sup>6</sup> The offence committed by them was 'copulation'.

<sup>7</sup> Sīra, 54.

<sup>8</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), iii, 164.

the death of 'Uthmān, he says:

"Yā Zayd, yā sayyid an-Najjār inna limā  
Aḥdatha cawmuka fī 'Uthmāna lī Khabarā"<sup>1</sup>

i.e. O Zayd (b. Thābit), the leader of the tribe of Najjār, verily,  
I am aware of the offence/crime committed by your people against  
'Uthmān.

The pre-Islamic poet, 'Amr b. Kulthūm considers it an 'offence'  
on the part of his beloved to sever relations with him and says:

"qifī nas'alki hal aḥdathti ṣurman  
li washk al-bayni am khunti al-Amīnā"<sup>2</sup>

(i.e. Stop, that we may ask you, whether you cut off communication  
with us (which is an offence that you have committed) to hasten  
separation, or whether you deceived the trusted one who never deceived  
you.).

Actually, the word 'ḥadath' in its verbal form, is used to denote  
'committing of any unapproved act whether or not it is punishable  
under law.' Thus the word 'ḥadathan', occurring in the tradition  
regarding Medina<sup>3</sup>, has been interpreted by Qaṣṭallānī, as 'the actions  
contrary to Shar' - the unapproved acts'.<sup>4</sup>

But the basic sense of the word 'ḥadath' is to perform an act

<sup>1</sup> Dīwān (Ḥ), 28.

<sup>2</sup> Seven Poems, 132.

<sup>3</sup> The tradition reads as follows: "Medina is sacred (ḥaram)...  
whosoever commits any offence in it (fa man aḥdatha fihā ḥadathan)  
shall incur the curse of Allāh, the Angels and all the people."  
(cf. SB, iv, 428 (I'tisām...)).

<sup>4</sup> Irshād, x, 320.

for the first time or 'to innovate'. Thus, in a story, found in the Qur'ān, Khidr says to Moses, "If thou wouldst follow me, ask no question about anything until I myself (first) speak to thee concerning it (ḥattā uḥditha laka minhu dhikrā)."<sup>1</sup>

At another place, the Qur'ān uses the word 'aḥdatha' in the sense of 'acquainting with some new ideas'. Prohibiting ~~in~~ the pronouncement of a hasty divorce, the Qur'ān says, "Thou knowest not if perchance God will bring about thereafter some 'new' situation (la'alla 'llāh yuḥdith ba'da dhālika amrā)."<sup>2</sup> Again, explaining some of the purposes of the revelation of the Qur'ān, Allāh says, "And thus have we sent down this Book, being a Qur'ān in the Arabic tongue: and we have inserted various threats and promises therein, that men may fear God, or that it may 'awaken some consideration' in them" (aw yuḥdith lahum dhikrā)."<sup>3</sup> The word 'yuḥdith' in the above verses have been used in conjunction with 'amr' and 'dhikr'. While in the former, 'yuḥdith' denotes 'creating of a changed, new situation' which may bring about reconcilliation between husband and wife, in the latter verse, it reminds the unbelievers of the 'Remembrance' as if it has been made known to them for the first time.

It can be seen from the foregoing discussions that the basic meaning of the root ḥa da tha is 'new' or 'recent'. The word in this sense was frequently used in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. Khasafī, for instance, says:

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 18:70.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 65:1.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 20:113.



"Wa nursī ilā jurthūmatin adrakat lanā

Ḥadīthan wa 'Ādiya min al-majd khidrimā"

i.e. And we make fast to a root stock that has reached maturity amongst us 'new' (ḥadīthan) and ancient glory in abundance.<sup>1</sup>

Again, Mutammim b. Nuwayra, in an elegy upon his brother, sings:  
"The daughter of 'Amrites (perhaps Mutammim's wife) asks, 'what ails thee, thou who but now (ḥadīthan) was cheerful and glad of heart, and tossedst thy flowing hair?'"<sup>2</sup>

To take some more examples, the expressions 'ḥadīth 'ahd bi 'l-Islām'<sup>3</sup> and 'ḥadīth 'ahd bi 'Urs'<sup>4</sup> mean respectively 'a recently converted muslim' and 'a newly married person'.

'Ḥadīth' in the sense of 'new' or 'recent' is also used in connection with one's age.<sup>5</sup> Thus 'ḥadīth as-sinn' means 'young in age' and the phrase 'ahdath al-qawm' is interpreted as 'the youngest among a group of people'.<sup>6</sup>

The term 'ahdāth' (in plural), in the sense of 'younger (in age)', occurs in the Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Sa'd, where it is reported that from amongst the younger companions of the Prophet (min ahdāth ashāb rasūl Allāh), Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī was the best faqīh.<sup>7</sup> On another

<sup>1</sup> Mufaḍ, (Lyalī), i, 628.

<sup>2</sup> Mufaḍ, (Lyalī), i, 537.

<sup>3</sup> Misbāḥ, s.v. "ḥa, da, tha".

<sup>4</sup> SB, ii, 87 (Al-Isticrād wa adā' d-duyūn).

<sup>5</sup> Misbāḥ, s.v. "ḥa da tha"; Jamhara, ii, 34.; Mukhtār, 142.; Wasīt, 160.; SAD, iii, 137 (Adāhi), ḥadīth no. 2829.

<sup>6</sup> Misbah, s.v. "ḥa da tha".

<sup>7</sup> Ṭab, II, ii, 125.

occasion, it is reported that Ibn 'Umar was reckoned among the younger jurists (min fucahā' 'l-ahdāth).<sup>1</sup> Again, while describing the ḥadīth narration (riwāya) of older and younger companions, Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Aslamī calls the latter as 'al-ahdāth'.<sup>2</sup>

The word, in this sense, is also used in connection with the age of animals. Thus Abū Jahl, using it in connection with a he-camel, said:

"mā tanqim al-ḥarb al-'Awān minnī,

bāzil 'Amayn ḥadīth sinnī

li mithl hādhā waladatnī ummī"<sup>3</sup>

(i.e. what has fierce war to dislike about me,  
A young he-camel with razor like teeth?  
For this very purpose did my mother bear me.)

While Abū Jahl uses the term in the sense of animal's age, Abū Jilda al-Yashkurī uses it for the age of human beings. In one of his poems he says,

"Ikhwatun qarrashū 'dh-dhunūb 'alaynā

Fī ḥadīthin min 'Umrinā wa cadīmī"<sup>4</sup>

(i.e. the brothers have earned sins for our family when we were young and also when we were old).

We come across with this word in a dialogue between 'Umayr b. Wahb and Muḥammad at the time of the former's conversion to Islam.

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, II, ii, 125.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, II, ii, 127.

<sup>3</sup> Sīra, 450. He recited the above verse on the day he was killed.

<sup>4</sup> Sīra, 61.

It is reported that when 'Umayr greeted Muḥammad according to pagan custom, saying: "in'amū sabāhan (good morning)", the Prophet told 'Umayr that God had honoured them with a better greeting, the salām - the greeting of the inhabitants of Paradise. 'Umayr thereupon replied, "By God, Muḥammad, you have taken to it recently (amā wallāhi yā Muḥammad, in kunta<sup>1</sup> bihā laḥadīth 'ahd)".<sup>2</sup>

We have seen in the above examples that the word 'ḥadīth', meaning 'new' or 'recent' is often used against 'qadīm'. It appears, therefore, that the technical definition of 'ḥadīth' as 'sayings, actions and silent approvals or disapprovals of the Prophet'<sup>3</sup> has emerged from this original meaning. Since the Qur'ān is uncreated and hence qadīm (old), the ḥadīth, being the words and instructions of Muḥammad, are certainly created and therefore 'new'. Hence its appellation as 'ḥadīth'. Furthermore, the noun 'ḥadīth' conveys the meaning of something novel, or an idea presented in a new form. Since the sayings of the Prophet were full of 'new' knowledge and had given 'new meanings' to several pre-Islamic concepts, they were rightly termed as 'ḥadīth'.

#### (ii) 'Discourse' or 'narrative'

'Ḥadīth' has another basic meaning - a discourse or narrative. In this second sense it signifies a story, a statement, a report, communication, talk or discourse<sup>4</sup>. In the Qur'ān we find the expressions

<sup>1</sup> It can also be read as "in kuntu", in which case it would be translated as "it is new to me."

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 473.

<sup>3</sup> Tadrīb, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Qāmūs, i, 170.

'ḥadīth Mūsā'<sup>1</sup> (story of Moses), 'ḥadīth dayf Ibrāhīm al-mukramīn'<sup>2</sup> (the story of Abraham's honoured guests) and 'ḥadīth al-Junūd'<sup>3</sup> (the story of the hosts), where the term 'ḥadīth' has been used in the sense of 'story'. On other occasions, the word has been used to signify a 'report' or 'statement'.<sup>4</sup>

The word in the sense of 'talk' or 'discourse' was in use even in the earliest times. To take for instance, Nābigha adh-Dhubayānī, the pre-Islamic poet, while praising the wife of an-Nu'mān, uses the expression 'ḥusn ḥadīthihā' to denote 'her sweet discourses'.<sup>5</sup>

To take another example, while describing the reason why she chose Muḥammad as her husband, Khadīja is reported to have said, "I have chosen thee (O Muḥammad) for your good character and your honest speech ('ala ṣidq ḥadīthika)".<sup>6</sup> Again, when Khadīja, in later years informed Waraqa b. Nawfal about Muḥammad's experience of receiving revelations, Waraqa recited some verses in which the word 'ḥadīth' occurs in the sense of 'words of mouth or speech'. The verses recited by him were as follows:

"Lajijtu wa kuntu fi'dh-dhikrā lujūjā

Lihammin ṭālamā ba'atha 'n-nashījā

Wa wasfin min Khadījata ba'da wasfin

Facad ṭāla 'ntizārī yā khadīja

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān 20:9.; 79:15.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 51:24.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 85:17.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 18:6.; 53:59.; 56:81.; 68:44.

<sup>5</sup> Ḥamāsa, 33.

<sup>6</sup> Sīra, 120.

Bibatn al-makkatayni 'alā rajā'ī

Hadīthuki an arā minhū khurūjā"<sup>1</sup>

(ie. I preserved and was persistent in remembering  
An anxiety which often evoked tears. And  
Confirmatory evidence kept coming from Khadīja  
Long have I had to wait, O Khadīja,  
In the vale of Mecca in spite of my hope  
That I might see the outcome of thy word)<sup>2</sup>

To take a few more examples, Azraqī, in his Akhbār Makka, quotes 'Āṭa as saying, "whosoever performs the circumambulation of Ka'ba should refrain from all verbal pronouncements (ḥadīth) save recitation from the Qur'ān".<sup>3</sup> In a report, found in Aghānī, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān, while bestowing a reward upon the poet Nuṣayb b. Rabāḥ, says, "laka jā'iza 'ala ṣidq ḥadīthika ( you deserve a reward for truthfulness in your speech))". The poet himself describes it in these words, "He gave me one thousand dīnār on account of my honest talk ('alā ṣidq ḥadīthī) and another thousand dīnār for my versification ('alā shi'rī)."<sup>4</sup>

Ka'b b. Mālik also uses the word 'ḥadīth' in the sense of 'talk' and 'statement'. Confessing to the Prophet that he had intentionally abstained from the battle of Tabūk he says among other things, "I know if I make a wrong statement (ḥadīthan kadhiban) today, you will

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<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 121.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra (Guil), 83.

<sup>3</sup> Akhbār, ii, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Agh, i, 342.

accept it...but if I make a true statement (ḥadīthan ṣidqan) which would excite your anger against me, I hope that Allāh will reward me for it in the end..."<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that in all the examples cited above, the word 'ḥadīth' has been used in the sense of 'speech' or 'talk'. Perhaps, it was on the basis of this inherent meaning as 'speech' or 'word of mouth' that the term 'ḥadīth' was applied to the Qur'ān also.<sup>2</sup> The Prophet himself uses this word for the Qur'ān and says, "Inna khayr al-ḥadīth Kitāb Allāh"<sup>3</sup> (Verily, the most truthful is the Book of Allāh) and "asdaq al-ḥadīth Kitāb Allāh"<sup>4</sup> (Verily, the most truthful is the Book of Allāh). Similarly, the companion Ibn Mas'ūd begins his sermon (khuṭba) with the phrase "inna asdaq al-ḥadīth Kitāb Allāh"<sup>5</sup> (Verily, the most truthful is the Book of Allāh i.e. the Qur'ān). According to the other version, the word 'asdaq' (most truthful), in the above report, has been substituted by 'aḥsan' (the best).<sup>6</sup> But the word 'ḥadīth' occurs in all the versions.

Interestingly enough, the word 'ḥadīth' for the Qur'ān was used even by the opponents of the Prophet. Thus it is reported that Nadr b. al-Hārith, after hearing the verses of the Qur'ān, commented: Muḥammad's ḥadīth<sup>7</sup> is nothing but the stories of earlier generations (mā ḥadīthuhū illā asāṭir al-awwalīn)."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 910.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 18:6.; 39:23.; 52:34.; 53:59.; 56:81.; 68:44.

<sup>3</sup> SM, i, 336 (Jum'a).

<sup>4</sup> SN, iii, 188 (Ṣalāt al-ʿĪdayn).

<sup>5</sup> Tabyīn, ii, 56.

<sup>6</sup> SB, iv, 420 (I'tisām...); Sīra, 340.; Irshād, ix, 63.

<sup>7</sup> In the eyes of unbelievers, the Qur'ān was Muḥammad's own work. Hence its ascription to Muḥammad by Nadr.

<sup>8</sup> Sīra, 383-384.

It is significant to note that in later years, the word 'ḥadīth' in the expressions 'asdaq al-ḥadīth' and 'aḥsan al-ḥadīth', was replaced by another term 'kalām' which also meant 'speech'. Thus Ibn Māja quotes a report saying, inter alia, "Aḥsan al-kalām kalām Allāh"<sup>1</sup> (the best speech is the speech of Allāh).

The replacement of the word 'ḥadīth' by 'kalām' is a clear testimony to the fact that the former meant 'speech', for 'kalām' (which replaced it) was the most appropriate word to denote 'a word of mouth'.

We have seen that the word 'ḥadīth', in its literal sense, meant the 'speech' or 'talk'. This being its basic sense, the 'ordinary reports' and 'historical accounts' also came to be known as 'ḥadīth'.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hishām frequently uses this word to denote 'an anecdote' or 'historical account'.<sup>3</sup>

He discussed, for example, the event of the Battle of Uḥud under the heading 'Ḥadīth Uḥud'<sup>4</sup> (the story of Uḥud). Furthermore, speaking about the source of his information about this event, he says, "Muḥammad b. Muslim az-Zuhrī, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Ḥibbān, 'Āṣim b. 'Umar b. Qatāda, Ḥuṣayn b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. 'Amr b. Sa'd b. Mu'adh and other scholars have given separate piece of information (ba'd al-ḥadīth) about Uḥud, all of which have been pieced together

<sup>1</sup> SIM (Introduction), i, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 154, 181, et passim.

<sup>3</sup> Sīra, 144, 554-555, 731, 736, et passim.

<sup>4</sup> Sīra, 555.



(ijitama'a ḥadīthuhum)..."<sup>1</sup>

We find that the word 'ḥadīth' in the above reports has been used in the sense of 'historical account'.

To take another example, he refers to an idol belonging to 'Amr b. Humama Ad-Dawsī, and says, "I shall describe its story (ḥadīthahū) at its (proper) place."<sup>2</sup> At another place, he quotes Ibn Ishāq as saying, "Quraysh had an idol by a well in the middle of the Ka'ba called 'Hubal'." Then he makes his own remark, "I shall mention its story (sa adhkurū ḥadīthahū) at its (proper) place."<sup>3</sup>

To take another example, Abū Hurayra once asked the people of Anṣār, "shall I regale you with the 'ḥadīth' from your 'aḥādīth', O People of Anṣār?" and then told them a story connected with the conquest of Mecca.<sup>4</sup> The words 'ḥadīth' and 'aḥādīth', used in this report clearly mean an 'anecdote' and 'stories' respectively.

Ḥadīth (pl. aḥādīth), thus, refers to the legend, fable and story, whether of religious or profane nature. Farrā' (d. 207 A.H.) hints at this meaning when he says, "the singular of aḥādīth is uḥdūtha (event); then they made it plural for ḥadīth."<sup>5</sup> To take for example, Azraqī reports that a group of Qurayshites, including Ja'da b. Hubayr, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith b. Hishām, Ḥārith b. 'Abd Allāh

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<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 555.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 54.

<sup>3</sup> Sīra, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Futūḥ, 52.; Mst, ii, 3/17.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdīth, 35.

and 'Abd Allāh b. Zam'a b. al-Aswad, once gathered together with Mu'āwiyā b. Sufyān, the then caliph, and related the 'aḥādīth' (stories) regarding Arabs. (fatadhākarū aḥādīth al-'Arab).<sup>1</sup>

To take one more example, 'Umar once came to the Prophet and said, "Verily, we hear aḥādīth (stories) from the Jews which seem appealing to us; do you wish that we should write some of them down." The Prophet's answer, according to the report, was in the negative.<sup>2</sup>

In all these examples, the word 'ḥadīth' has been used in its literal sense viz the story, anecdote or event.

Another derivative of ḥa da tha is the verbal form 'tahdīth', meaning 'to describe, to relate and to narrate (stories, facts and events etc.)' The word, in this sense, has been repeatedly used in the Qur'ān<sup>3</sup> and other classical texts. Glorifying the heroic deeds of his ancestors, 'Amr b. Kulthūm says:

"fahā hadditha fī Jasham ibni Bakrīn  
binaqḍīn fī khutūb al-awwalīnā"<sup>4</sup>

(Have you (O 'Amr) been told anything about the tribe of Jasham b. Bakr, concerning their breaking their engagements in the great affairs of the former people).

Again, al-Yashkurī, a mukhadrimī poet, speaks of a fair lady in these words:

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- 1 Akhbār, i, 110.  
2 Fā'iq, iii, 218.  
3 Qur'ān, 2:76.; 93:11.; 99:4.  
4 Seven Poems, 151.

"tusmi' u 'l-huddātha qawlan hasanan

law arādū ghayrahū lam yustama."<sup>1</sup>

(fair and sweet are her words to those she talks with;  
but if they should seek aught else, she hears them not).

Giving a description of Umm Anmār's house, Azraqī reports that the men of Quraysh used to sit chatting in the courtyard of her house. In his words: "kānat rijāl Quraysh yajlisūna bifinā'i baytihā yatahaddathūna".<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in connection with a historical site, al-Uḥuwāna, Azraqī remarks, "al-Uḥuwāna 'ind al-Layṭ kāna majlisun, yajlisu fihi man kharaja min Makkata yatahaddathūna fihi bi'l'ashīyy"<sup>3</sup> i.e. Al-Uḥuwāna was a meeting place where people from Mecca used to talk leisurely at night.

From this verbal form comes the word muḥaddith, meaning narrator of an account<sup>4</sup>, not necessarily the narrator of the Prophetic tradition. However, the words 'haddatha' and 'muḥaddith', when used in Islamic context, mean 'he narrated a tradition of the Prophet' and 'the narrator of Apostolic tradition' respectively.

## 2. Technical meaning of 'ḥadīth':

Having dealt with the literal connotation of the word 'ḥadīth', we now turn to its technical meaning. Technically speaking, 'a saying, an action, a tacit approval of the Prophet and a description about him

<sup>1</sup> Mufaḍ (Lyal), i, 387.

<sup>2</sup> Akhbār, i, 206.

<sup>3</sup> Akhbār, ii, 225.

<sup>4</sup> Sīra, 17, where Ibn Ishāq uses it in the sense of 'reporter of an anecdote'.

(ṣifa) is called a ḥadīth'.<sup>1</sup> This was the earliest technical meaning of 'ḥadīth', probably inferred from the Qur'ān. Later, it included into its scope, not only the sayings, doings and approvals or disapprovals of his companions, especially the senior companions, but also the juristic rulings (fatāwā) of the successors (Tābi'ūn).<sup>2</sup>

The Qur'ān uses the word 'ḥadīth' in multiple senses. A close study of the passages where the word occurs shows that the technical definition of 'ḥadīth' is based on the Qur'ānic use of the term. Let us see, therefore, in what sense is the term 'ḥadīth' used in the Qur'ān.

At the outset we see that it has been used in its literal sense, meaning 'talk', 'discourse', 'news', and 'story'. Thus 'ḥadīthin ghayra'<sup>3</sup> (some other discourse), 'lahw al-ḥadīth'<sup>4</sup> (frivolous discourse), 'musta'nisin li-ḥadīthin'<sup>5</sup> (seeking to listen to talk), 'bi ayyi ḥadīthin'<sup>6</sup> (in what narration), 'asarra...ḥadīthan'<sup>7</sup> (confided an information), and 'asdaq...ḥadīthā'<sup>8</sup> (more true in word) indicate the 'words of mouth', 'talk', 'speech' and 'discourse'. The holy Qur'ān itself has been mentioned as 'ḥadīth'<sup>9</sup>, for it was a speech (kalām) of Allāh.

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<sup>1</sup> Dustūr, ii, 15.; As-sunna, 16.; Zunūn, i, 635.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, vii, 33.; Muwāfaqāt, iii, 69-70.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 4:140.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 31:6 .

<sup>5</sup> Qur'ān, 33:53.

<sup>6</sup> Qur'ān, 77:50.

<sup>7</sup> Qur'ān, 66:3

<sup>8</sup> Qur'ān, 4:87.

<sup>9</sup> Qur'ān, 18:6; 39:23; 52:34; 53:59; 56:81; 68:44.

At one place in the Qur'ān, the expression 'ḥadīth' occurs in connection with al-ghāshiya (lit. the overwhelming event)<sup>1</sup>, while on other occasions the word is used to denote the story<sup>2</sup>, with its plural ahādīth (stories).<sup>3</sup>

We have seen that the verbal form 'tahdīth', derived from the root ḥa da tha, means 'to describe, to relate and to narrate (stories, facts and events etc.)'. The word occurs in the Qur'ān in this very sense<sup>4</sup>. The technical definition of ḥadīth as the sayings, actions and tacit approval of the Prophet seems to have been inferred from the above Qur'ānic expression. The Qur'ān considers 'dīn' (religion) as 'ni'ma' (favour)<sup>5</sup>, and preaches its dissemination with the words: "wa ammā bi ni'mati rabbika fa ḥaddith"<sup>6</sup> (And the favour of thy Lord, proclaim).

Now, since the Prophet was propagating this 'ni'ma' (favour) of Allāh (i.e. the religion) through his actions and sayings, the reports of all these preachings were rightly called 'ḥadīth'.

The term might have been derived from other such expressions in the Qur'ān where the word 'ḥadīth' was used to describe the actions and deeds of the prophets in general. Thus the behaviour of

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 88:1.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 12:111.; 20:9.; 51:24.; 79:15.; 85:17.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 23:44.; 34:19.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 2:76.; 93:11.; 99:4.

<sup>5</sup> Qur'ān, 5:3. The verse reads as follows: "This day have I perfected for you your religion (dīnakum) and completed My favour (ni'mati) to you."

<sup>6</sup> Qur'ān, 93:11.

Abraham's honoured guests (51:24) and of Moses (20:9.; 79:15) have been expressed by the term 'ḥadīth'.

On the basis of these verses, where the word has been used for the sayings and conduct of the prophets in general, though sometimes of Muḥammad alone, 'ḥadīth' was restricted for the reports regarding the Prophet Muḥammad.

That the term 'ḥadīth' be used for the sayings of Muḥammad was suggested by the Prophet himself. It is reported that Abū Hurayra once asked the Prophet: "Who will be the happiest person on the day of resurrection, thanks to your intercession?" whereupon the Prophet replied, "I have been expecting, O Abū Hurayra, that you would be the first to inquire from me about this 'ḥadīth' because I have noticed your eagerness towards the ḥadīth."<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion, when the term 'ḥadīth' in the above sense was used in his presence, he tacitly approved of it. The report says that a woman called on the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allāh, menfolk (alone) are benefitted by your sayings (bi ḥadīthika); fix for us (women folk), therefore, a particular day when we could also come and you teach us from what Allāh has taught you." The Prophet thereupon said, "Assemble on such and such a day at such and such a place."<sup>2</sup>

Again, it is reported that in a battle, the Prophet told some of

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<sup>1</sup> SB, iv, 245 (Riqāq).; Tab, IV, ii, 56.

<sup>2</sup> SB, iv, 430 (I'tisām...).

his companions that a certain man, though fighting on the side of the Muslims, was 'one of the people of the Fire'. His companions were obviously surprised to hear such a statement about a man who was fighting for Islam. But towards the end of the battle, when they saw him committing suicide, they believed the Prophet's words, rushed to him and said, "God made true your saying (ṣaddaqa Allāh ḥadīthaka)."<sup>1</sup>

The companions also used the word 'ḥadīth' to mean 'ḥadīth an-Nabī' i.e. the Prophet's traditions. To take for example Abū Hurayra reports that no one among the companions of the Prophet save 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ possesses more ḥadīth than myself.<sup>2</sup> The word ḥadīth used here means nothing but the sayings of the Prophet. This becomes clearer when we read the remaining portion of this report which runs: "He ('Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ) used to write them down while I did not do so."<sup>3</sup> Another companion, 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far also uses the word in the same sense. He says, "One day the Messenger of Allāh asked me to ride behind him and (on the way) told me a ḥadīth (fa asarra ilayya ḥadīthan)."<sup>4</sup> Evidently, the word 'ḥadīth' used here refers to the sayings of the Prophet.

<sup>1</sup> Irshād, ix, 352.

<sup>2</sup> Irshād, i, 206.; Fāsil, 34b, 35a.

<sup>3</sup> Irshād, i, 206.; Fāsil, 34b, 35a.

<sup>4</sup> SAD, iii, 33 (Jihād), ḥadīth no. 2549.; SM, i, (Hayd).



In Abū Hurayra's other statement that 'I possess five boxes full of ahādīth'<sup>1</sup>, the term 'ahādīth' clearly indicates the traditions of the Prophet. Anas b. Mālik also uses the word 'ahādīth' in the sense of 'Prophet's traditions' when he says, "I refrain from transmitting to you a large number of ahādīth, for the Prophet had said, 'whosoever tells a lie about me intentionally, he should prepare himself for Hell'.<sup>2</sup> Similarly when Ibn 'Abbās said, "we used to learn 'ḥadīth' by heart"<sup>3</sup>, he meant by 'ḥadīth', the traditions of the Prophet.

To take another example, Awzā'ī lays down the rule: 'when there comes to you a ḥadīth from the Prophet, you should avoid all other things (personal ijtihād and qiyās etc.) because the Prophet was the (best) bearer of tidings from God.'<sup>4</sup> Here, Awzā'ī explicitly refers to the ḥadīth of the Prophet.

Abū Yūsuf also uses the word in the sense of the Prophet's ḥadīth.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 66a.

<sup>2</sup> SB, i, 39-40, ('Ilm).

<sup>3</sup> SIM, i, 15 (Introduction).

<sup>4</sup> Tdh, i, 170. On the basis of this report, along with another, where Awzā'ī says, 'no one is allowed to give his opinion against the sunna of the Prophet' (cf. SD, i, 114), it can be said that it was Awzā'ī and not Shāfi'ī who first laid down the legal theory of the paramountcy of ḥadīth next to the Qur'ān.

<sup>5</sup> At times, however, he refers by 'ḥadīth', the traditions of the companions. (cf. Siyar, 41, 52.; Kharāj, 19, 65, 70.; Hujaj (Sh), 164.)

We find several such usages in his Ar-Radd 'alā 's-siyar al-Awzā'i.<sup>1</sup> On one occasion after mentioning 'Umar's practice of accepting the traditions of the Prophet on the testimony of two witnesses he remarked: "Beware of shādhdh<sup>2</sup> ḥadīth".<sup>3</sup> In this statement he uses the word 'ḥadīth' in the sense of 'ḥadīth of the Prophet.' To take another example, he is reported to have said: "You should take into account (only) the well known tradition (fa'alayka min al-ḥadīth fīmā ta'rifuhū 'l-'amma)."<sup>4</sup> Here, too, Abū Yūsuf seems to have used the word 'ḥadīth' in the sense of the Prophet's traditions.

In addition to all these examples, the terms 'ḥadīth' and 'aḥādīth' in the following statements also convey the sense of the Prophet's traditions:

(i) 'Utba said that Ibn 'Abbās related only two or three aḥādīth in a month.<sup>5</sup>

(ii) It is reported that 'Umar forbade the companions to relate too many aḥādīth (ikthār al-ḥadīth).<sup>6</sup>

(iii) The Prophet said: "Verily, the ḥadīth will soon spread from me (inna 'l-ḥadīth sayafshū 'annī)."<sup>7</sup>

(iv) 'Alī is reported as quoting from the Prophet: "If you write the ḥadīth, write it with isnād."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Siyar, 14, 29, 30, 63, 135 et passim.

<sup>2</sup> Shādhdh (lit. Exceptional) is a tradition reported on the authority of a single narrator.

<sup>3</sup> Siyar, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Siyar, 24.

<sup>5</sup> SD, i, 46.

<sup>6</sup> Bayān, ii, 120.

<sup>7</sup> Siyar, 25.

<sup>8</sup> Imlā', 5.

It is clear from the foregoing examples that the term 'ḥadīth' in earliest times referred to the traditions of the Prophet only. But with the passage of time, its scope widened, and it included in its scope not only the sayings and actions of the Prophet, but also of the companions and even successors. Thus it was defined as the "report of the sayings and decisions of the Prophet, the companions, the successors and the followers of these successors."<sup>1</sup> Sakhāwī (a. 643 A.H.) includes in the definition of 'ḥadīth' not only the traditions but also the religious rulings (Fatāwā) of the companions and the successors.<sup>2</sup>

The English rendering of the term 'ḥadīth' is 'tradition'.<sup>3</sup> The choice of the word 'tradition' for 'ḥadīth' seems to have been made after giving due consideration to the meaning and significance of ḥadīth. The word 'tradition' in English etymology means 'handing over' and its conception implies (a) a deposit which is handed over; and (b) depositories, i.e. persons who are in possession of the deposit, and are commissioned to preserve it and transmit it to successors".<sup>4</sup> When we apply this definition of 'tradition' on 'ḥadīth' we find that it fits in well with it. The ḥadīth was learnt, preserved, and transmitted to successors. Furthermore, the narration on the one hand and transmitters of ḥadīth on the other, form part and parcel of the science of tradition, for ḥadīth consists of both matn and isnād. Hence the apt rendering 'tradition'.

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<sup>1</sup> Tawjīh, 93.; Talqīh, 187.

<sup>2</sup> Mughīth, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Dictionary of Islam, 201, 639-646.; Robson, "Hadith", EI (New), iii, 23-29.

<sup>4</sup> Williams, N.P., "Tradition", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, xii, 411.

The ahādīth, on the basis of their content or matn, have been divided into legal, ritual, political, and prophetic etc. Another classification of ḥadīth is based on its situational factor. If a tradition was related by the Prophet or other companions verbally, it is called ḥadīth qawli (narrative tradition). Similarly, if an act was performed by the Prophet and was recorded thereafter, it came to be known as Ḥadīth fi'li (ḥadīth regarding the Prophet's practices). But if a certain act was performed without the Prophet's expressed order or prohibition and he gave an implicit approval of it by not objecting to it, this is also called a "ḥadīth" - "ḥadīth taqrīrī" (ḥadīth of implicit consent). Under the first category of traditions come the Prophet's sayings: his utterances regarding any matter, reported in the collections of Ḥadīth, are 'ḥadīth qawli'. The examples of the second are abundant. The reports of the companions and successors relating the Prophet's actions in matters of 'Ibādāt', like the manner of making ablution, the prayer, and fasting etc. are all known as 'ḥadīth fi'li'. As regards the last category, the following is a clear example: The Prophet while sending a deputation to Banū Qurayṣa said to the members of the delegation, "you would offer your afternoon (ʿAsr) prayer at Banū Qurayṣa". Some of the companions took these words literally and did not pray the 'ʿAsr' prayer until they reached their destination although the time of prayers had come before arriving at that place; others prayed at its scheduled time taking the saying of the Prophet to mean 'making hurry' in reaching Banū Qurayṣa. When these people came back and the difference in interpretation of the Prophet's saying was made known to him, he approved the acts of both parties. This ḥadīth of the Prophet came to be known as 'ḥadīth taqrīrī'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sunna (Sib), 60. ; Ṭab, II, i, 54-55.

The chains or isnād in ḥadīth plays a very important role. Its paramount importance is clear from the fact - and it is very important to note - that while counting the number of aḥādīth, the chains (isnād) through which they have been transmitted, and not the contents (matn), are taken into consideration. Thus, one text of ḥadīth reported by two chains of narrators will be counted as two instead of one. The number of ḥadīth, in other words, means the number of chains of narrators (isnād) and not the text.<sup>1</sup>

The scholars of ḥadīth literature have divided the traditions into various categories according to the degree of their reliability. These classifications are made both on the basis of the text (matn) and the chain of transmitters (isnād).

The science of ḥadīth, containing an enormous literature, has been developed into various branches. One hundred of these branches have been summarised in the works of 'Ulūm al-ḥadīth'.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. 'Ḥadīth - Sunna' relationship:

Closely related to the term 'ḥadīth' is 'sunna' which originally meant a precedent, custom or rule but was later used to connote the practices and commandments of Muḥammad and his companions. Since we have already discussed 'sunna' at great length in the preceding chapter let it not detain us at the moment. Its mention here is merely to show that despite the fact that ḥadīth and sunna are very

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<sup>1</sup> Tawjīh, 93.; Talqīh, 187.

<sup>2</sup> Tadrīb, 9.

often regarded as equivalents,<sup>1</sup> they are in actual fact not identical. 'Ḥadīth' in early times generally referred to a report from a binding authority like the Prophet or his companions, whereas the 'sunna' referred to the established religious norms. In this way, while 'sunna' was the practice and teaching of the Prophet, ḥadīth was its documentation. That is why Ibn Ḥanbal commented on a certain ḥadīth:<sup>2</sup> "This ḥadīth contains five sunnas".<sup>3</sup> Drawing the distinction between the two terms Wensinck remarks, "Ḥadīth is the external sunna the internal side of tradition; ḥadīth is the form, sunna, the matter".<sup>4</sup> Similarly, while in Guillaume's words "Hadith enshrines the sunna"<sup>5</sup>, Grunebaum plainly states that "Muhammad's 'sunna' is usually recorded in ḥadīth".<sup>6</sup>

We cite below a few examples to show that 'ḥadīth' and 'sunna' are not identical:

(i) Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 A.H.) in his letter to 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, speaks of the freedom of will and human responsibility. Although he quotes no tradition in this letter, he does make a distinction between ḥadīth and sunna. He says: "The predecessors have narrated His (Allāh's) ḥikma (rawū ḥikmatahū) and followed the sunna of the prophet (wa 'stannū bi sunnat rasūl Allāh)."<sup>7</sup> By ḥikma

<sup>1</sup> Tawjīh, 3.; As-sunna, 16.; Dustūr, ii, 15.; Tafsīr (Bayd), ii, 132, where al-Kāzarūnī remarks: "As-sunna ay al-ḥadīth" (the sunna i.e. ḥadīth).

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the death of a muslim in the state of iḥrām - a sacral state during the ḥajj pilgrimage.

<sup>3</sup> SAD, iii, 296 (Janā'iz), ḥadīth no. 3238.

<sup>4</sup> Islamic Jurisprudence, 30, citing Wensinck's article in Moslem world, vol. XI, (1921), p. 239.

<sup>5</sup> Traditions, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Med. Islam, 108.

<sup>7</sup> Der Islam, xxi, 68.

he seems to mean ḥadīth which the companions had narrated (rawū), whereas sunna refers to the 'practice'.

(ii) Imām Mālik (d. 179 A.H.), in his Muwatta', frequently uses the term 'sunna' by which he means the practice prevalent in Medina. Against this 'practice' he quotes 'ḥadīth', either in support of a particular sunna or against it. For instance, he first quotes a ḥadīth regarding pre-emption, and then remarks, "wa'alā dhālika 's-sunnat allatī lā ikhtilāfa fihā 'indanā (to the same effect is the sunna on which there is no disagreement among us)."<sup>1</sup>

Mālik makes a clear distinction between 'sunna' and 'ḥadīth' and holds that the former is preferable to the latter. In his own words, "aḥabb al-aḥādīth ilayya ma-'jtama'a n-nās 'alayhi (the best traditions to me are those (practices) on which people have agreed upon)."<sup>2</sup> This regard for Medinese ijmā' (consensus) was so much stressed by Mālik that he sometimes ignored the aḥādīth which were incorporated into his own corpus. One such example is the case of 'Umrā i.e. a gift made for the lifetime of the recipient on whose death it reverts to the donor or his heirs. Mālik recognises it lawful although a number of aḥādīth quoted in his own Muwatta' disapprove of these gifts.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, he quotes traditions which allow pilgrimage by proxy whether the beneficiary on whose behalf it is performed is alive or dead.<sup>4</sup> But following the 'practice' he disallows it on behalf of the person who is alive.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), iii, 378.

<sup>2</sup> Muwāfaqāt, iii, 66, 70.

<sup>3</sup> Social Structure, 174.

<sup>4</sup> Muwatta' (Sh). - (D), 138.

<sup>5</sup> Hujaj, 162.



(iii) Ash-Shaybānī (d. 189 A.H.), a contemporary of Mālik, says that if a man makes purchase of an absent thing which he has not seen, he has the option of accepting or rejecting it when produced before him. In support of this he quotes some ahādīth and concludes by saying that this view is accepted by the generality of traditions as well as by the practice of the people.<sup>1</sup> For 'traditions' he uses 'ahādīth'; for practice 'sunna'. Hence a distinction.

(iv) Describing the womens' shares of booty in wars, Abū Yūsuf (d. 182 A.H.) says, "The ḥadīth about this abound, and the sunna are well known about this matter (wa 'l-ḥadīth fī hādha kathīr wa as-sunna fī hādha ma'rūfa)".<sup>2</sup>

(v) 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. al-Mahdī (d. 198 A.H.) is reported to have said: "Sufyān ath-Thawrī was an authority (imām) on 'ḥadīth' but not on 'sunna' and the opposite was true of al-Awzā'ī; Malik combined in himself both types of expert and masterly qualities."<sup>3</sup>

(vi) Dhahabī states on the authority of 'Abbās who related that Ibn Ma'īn (d. 233 A.H.) said, "Abū Yūsuf was learned in 'ḥadīth' and 'sunna' (Sāhib ḥadīth wa sāhib sunna)"<sup>4</sup> The conjunctive particle 'wa', meaning 'and', in the above quotation is significant.

(vii) In a report found in at-Ṭabarī's (d. 310 A.H.) Annales, 'ḥadīth' is distinguished from 'al-'amal' (practice) - a term often interchanged with 'sunna'. The report says: Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm was a judge in Medina. (Once) when he decided a case contrary to a ḥadīth and came home, his brother,

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<sup>1</sup> Hujaj, 188.

<sup>2</sup> Siyar, 38.

<sup>3</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), i, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Tdh, i, 270.

'Abd Allāh, who was a pious man, asked him, 'O my brother, have you not given this judgement today?'. Muḥammad replied, 'yes, my brother'. Whereupon 'Abd Allāh reproached, 'what of the ḥadīth, my brother? The tradition (ḥadīth) is important enough to base one's judgement on it.' Muḥammad replied, 'Also what of the practice (al-'amal)?'<sup>1</sup>

(viii) The best example of sunna-ḥadīth distinction can be found in al-Fihrist of Ibn an-Nadīm (d. ca 385 A.H.) where a reference is made of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Marūzī's book, entitled 'Kitāb as-sunna bi shawāhid al-ḥadīth (the book of sunna with confirmatory ḥadīth).'<sup>2</sup>

(ix) In the words of Schacht, "They (traditions from the Prophet and others) are not identical with the sunna but provide its documentation, whether we take sunna with Shāfi'i, and the later theory as the model behaviour of the Prophet, or in its older meaning as the traditional usage of the community...."<sup>3</sup>

From the examples cited above it becomes clear that sunna refers in the main to the practice of the Prophet whereas ḥadīth is a record or documentation of the same. But the scope of ḥadīth is not restricted to the record of these practices alone (which are technically called ḥadīth fi'lī); it comprises in its scope the records of verbal pronouncements (ḥadīth qawli) as well as the tacit approvals (ḥadīth taqrīri) of the Prophet.

It should be borne in mind that in early Islam the chief concern of the companions was to watch the conduct of the Prophet and to

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<sup>1</sup> Annales, iii, 2505-2506.

<sup>2</sup> Fihrist, 321.

<sup>3</sup> OMJ, 3.

follow him in every walk of life. The Qur'ān was given to the people of the new faith as a guide, but it was succinct in most cases. It dealt generally with broad principles and essentials of religion, going into details in very rare cases. It was in the practice of the Prophet that one had to look for these details. Consequently, the sunna became the focus of attention. The companions tried to conform their actions to the act of the Prophet, especially when they were told: "Verily in the messenger of Allāh ye have a good example."<sup>1</sup>

Briefly speaking, the basis of legal codification in early Islam was the practice of the Prophet (sunna). It was made clear by the Prophet himself. He is reported to have said, "Sallū kamā ra'aytumunī uṣallī (Pray as you see me praying)"<sup>2</sup>, implying thereby that laws should be made on the basis of his personal conduct. Similarly, his words "alā akhbartuhā annī af'alu dhālika" (Did I not inform her (Umm Salama) that I myself do it?)<sup>3</sup> clearly explain that the basis of law should be the conduct of the Prophet. It is, therefore, not astonishing that Muslims in early Islam cared so much for the Prophet's sunna. This was the need of the hour; the law had to be obtained from this medium alone, hence the focus of attention on the sunna of the Prophet. That is why, while dealing with two fundamental sources of Islamic law, the theologians use the term 'Kitāb and sunna'<sup>4</sup> or 'Qur'ān and sunna'<sup>5</sup>, and not 'Kitāb and ḥadīth' or 'Qur'ān and ḥadīth'.

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 33:21.

<sup>2</sup> SB, i, 165 (Adhān).; Irshād, ii, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Hujja, i, 140-141.; Musnad (Shaf), i, 257. The act refers to the Prophet's practice with regard to kissing the wife during a fast.

<sup>4</sup> SD, i, 145.; Bayān, ii, 61, 190-193.; Fath, xiii, 263; Kāmil, i, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Margoliouth, "Omar's instructions to the Kadi", JRAS, (1910), p. 309.

But when sunna was used in connection with certain region it meant the sunna of the Prophet as acted upon by the people of that specific area. In other words, the concept of 'parochial sunna' contained an inherent idea that the region in question represented the sunna of the Prophet and his companions. The preference of sunna over ḥadīth by Mālik<sup>1</sup> was due to his belief that a surer depository of the Prophet's sunna was the action of the companions and not the reported traditions. "The most favourite traditions (aḥabb al-aḥādīth) to me", he said, "are those (practices) on which people have agreed upon."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that sunna is the basis of Islamic law does not in any way minimise the importance of ḥadīth, for it is considered as one of the sources through which sunna of the Prophet can be known. Often when ḥadīth informs about a sunna so far unknown, the prevalent practice on that particular case is replaced by this newly discovered sunna. To take an example from early Islam, 'Umar had prohibited the use of perfume during the state of Ṭhrām (before circumambulation of Ka'ba). This practice continued until Sālim's ('Umar's grandson) time. When Sālim came to know of a tradition (ḥadīth) from the Prophet contrary to the prevailing practice, he gave up the practice in favour of the sunna of the Prophet.<sup>3</sup>

Another such example is found in Azra'ī's Akhbār Makka. It is reported that Meccans used to bury their deceased at a place situated between valleys of Yumnā (now known as Shi'b al-'Afārīt and Shi'b

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<sup>1</sup> Muwatta' (Zur), iii, 378.

<sup>2</sup> Muwāfacāt, iii, 66.

<sup>3</sup> Ikhtilāf, 25.

al-Jazarayn) and Shāma (known today as Shi'b as-Sāfī). This practice was in vogue in pre-Islamic and early Islamic period. But when people knew about a ḥadīth in which the Prophet had declared ash-shi'b and al-maqbarā as auspicious, they started burying their dead bodies at the last mentioned two places.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding this difference, ḥadīth and sunna are sometimes used alternatively to mean one and the same thing. This is because of their common characteristic that 'knowledge of both of them is rooted in tradition'.<sup>2</sup> Abū Yūsuf in the early period of sunna - ḥadīth development uses the former in the sense of ḥadīth. Discussing the rules of zakāt on gold and silver, he says, "It is proved by sunna that the amount of zakāt on gold and silver will be assessed on the basis of proportion of weight and not on its value. If a man possesses gold worth fifteen mithqāl, he is exempted from zakāt even though its value amounts to one thousand dirhams. "The reason behind this", he says, "is that it is proved on the basis of a ḥadīth that zakāt is obligatory on a man who possesses gold worth twenty mithqāl."<sup>3</sup>

The words 'sunna' and 'ḥadīth' in this example appear to have been used interchangeably.

In addition to 'sunna', there were a few other terms used in early Islam to convey the sense of ḥadīth. The most widely used was ilm, to which we now turn.

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<sup>1</sup> Akḥbār, ii, 171.

<sup>2</sup> Mst, ii, 12/25.

<sup>3</sup> Ikhtilāf (A), 130.

#### 4. Concept of 'Ilm in relation to ḥadīth:

'Ilm or 'knowledge' is a general term for any information - historical, religious or legal. It also is a term for 'science', for instance, 'ilm an-nafs (the science of self or Psychology), 'ilm al-ḥadīth (the science of tradition), 'ilm al-ḥayawān (the science of animals or zoology) and so on. In early Islamic period, the word was mainly used to denote religious knowledge, especially the knowledge of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. In certain context it was restricted to ḥadīth alone. On the basis of evidence available to us following were the senses in which this term was used.

(i) Knowledge in general: When unqualified, the term meant knowledge in general. Ibn 'Abbās, for instance, says, "'Ilm is in abundance, all of which cannot be stored in your heart; seek, therefore, the best of it."<sup>1</sup> In support of his view he quotes the Qur'ān and says, "Did you not hear Allāh's words: 'those who listen to the message (Qur'ān) and follow the best of it, they are guided by God, and they are the sensible, wise'."<sup>2</sup>

The Qur'ān also uses the term 'ilm and its verbal forms in general sense of 'knowledge'. It says, for instance: "The knowledge of it (the Last day) is with Allāh only."<sup>3</sup> Again, the angels are quoted as saying, "Be glorified! We have no knowledge ('ilm) saving that which thou hast taught us ('allamtanā). Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the knower (al-'alīm), the Wise."<sup>4</sup> Allāh Himself is spoken of

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 141.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 141.; Qur'ān, 39:18.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 33:63.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 2:32.

as the One who "knoweth (ya'lam) all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and He knoweth what ye conceal and what ye publish. And Allah is Aware ('alim) of what is in the breasts (of men)."<sup>1</sup>

We find frequent mention of 'ilm' and 'ahl al-ilm' in the Sira of Ibn Hishām.<sup>2</sup> While the former generally means 'an information or knowledge', the latter has been used in the sense of 'scholar' or 'the possessor of knowledge in general'. Thus the expression 'ahl al-ilm bi 'sh-shi'r'<sup>3</sup> indicates the 'scholar of poetry'.

(ii) Historical knowledge: The word 'ilm' also meant 'a knowledge about the past'. It referred to historical information, and the possessor of this knowledge, known as ahl al-ilm, meant 'historian' and 'scholar of maghāzī'.<sup>4</sup> Azraqī uses the term 'ahl al-ilm' for scholars of particular locality who possessed geographical or historical information.<sup>5</sup> For instance, while describing the event of demolition of Ka'ba, he says, "when Ibn az-Zubayr intended to fell al-Ka'ba (to rebuild it), he asked a scholar (sa'la rajulan min ahl al-ilm) from Mecca as whence did the Quraysh bring stones when they had built the Ka'ba."<sup>6</sup>

Ibn Sa'd provides us with another example where 'ilm' denotes a historical information. He reports: "Some of those who relate 'ilm

<sup>1</sup> Qur'an, 64:4.

<sup>2</sup> Sira, 4, 18, 44, 51, 56, and passim.

<sup>3</sup> Sira, 4, 44, 416, 549, 643, et passim.

<sup>4</sup> Sira, 18, 51, 56, 184, 209, 459, 588, 689, 882, et passim.

<sup>5</sup> Akhbār, ii, 32, 48, 56, 145, 161, 162, 174, 205, 215, 231.

<sup>6</sup> Akhbār, i, 145.



(ba'du man yarwī l-'ilm) have mentioned that Mas'ūd b. ar-Rabī' had a brother called 'Amr b. ar-Rabī' who accompanied the Prophet and witnessed the battle of Badr."<sup>1</sup>

Giving a certain historical account, Ibn Hishām says, "Some of the scholars (ba'du ahl al-'ilm) related to me that 'Abd ar-Rahmān b. 'Awf was injured in his mouth; his teeth were broken and he had twenty wounds or more, some of them in his foot, as a result of which he became lame."<sup>2</sup>

That 'ilm indicated the knowledge of historical events is also evident from a report found in K. al-Aghānī. It says: "Zubayr relates that some of the scholars (ba'du ahl al-'ilm) related to me that when Aḥwas called on Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik...etc."<sup>3</sup>

The word 'ilm in the expression 'ruwāt al-'ilm' (the narrators of historical knowledge) - another term for scholars of history - also means 'historical knowledge'. Ibn Sa'd uses the word in this sense when he reports: "Ba'd ruwāt al-'ilm (some of the narrators of 'ilm) mentioned that Ḥujr b. 'Adī called on the Prophet with his brother...."<sup>4</sup>

(iii) Theological and Legal Knowledge: The religious knowledge during the first century of Islam consisted of the Qur'ān, the ḥadīth, the fiqh and the tafsir; and the common term used for all these disciplines was 'ilm'. "The 'ilm of the earliest period was integral

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, III, i, 119.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 574.

<sup>3</sup> Agh, iv, 250.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, VI, 151.

but composite", says Nabia Abbott. She further elaborates: "It drew on the Qur'ān, ḥadīth and sunnah, and law and custom without any clear differentiation between 'ilm al-Qur'ān and 'ilm al-ḥadīth and 'ilm al-fih, each of which was later to develop into various branches."<sup>1</sup>

In the words of Goldziher, "Ilm denotes besides the koran and its exposition, the accurate knowledge of the legal decisions handed down from the Prophet and his companions."<sup>2</sup>

In this early period there was no distinction between legal and religious disciplines. The two aspects were found side by side in the Qur'ān and in the teachings of the Prophet. By 'ilm, at this stage, was meant the knowledge of the Qur'ān, the Ḥadīth and the Fiqh<sup>3</sup> and 'ahl al-'ilm denoted the scholar of these disciplines in general. When 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd commented, "If the 'ilm of entire Arabian tribes were to be compared with the 'ilm of 'Umar, the latter will be greater"<sup>4</sup>, he meant in all probability, the religious knowledge known at that time, for 'Umar could not possibly compete with his contemporaries in scientific and literary knowledge (especially poetry) of the time.

Again, it is reported that 'Umar possessed so much 'ilm (religious knowledge) that he had excelled the scholars (fuqahā') of Medina.<sup>5</sup> In this report the word 'fiqh and 'ilm have been used synonymously,

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Encyclopaedia of Islam, ii, 101.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, II, ii, 100.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, II, ii, 100..

<sup>5</sup> Tab, II, ii, 99.

meaning existing theological knowledge.

'Urwa b. az-Zubayr also uses the word in this sense when he advises his sons: "Acquire the knowledge (ta'allamū l-'ilm), for although you are younger generation (ṣiḡḡār qawmin) now, you would, in near future, become older ones (from whom people will acquire theological knowledge)."<sup>1</sup>

Explaining the meanings of 'ilm and fich, Gibb says, "Nearly a century elapsed before scholars began to specialise in one (legal) or the other (religious) aspect." "Ultimately", he continues, "they were distinguished by relative terms: 'ilm 'positive knowledge' denoting theology (though not excluding law), and fich 'understanding' denoting law (as based on theology....)"<sup>2</sup>

Although the expression 'ahl al-'ilm' usually indicated 'scholar' in general, it sometimes referred to the 'scholars of religious knowledge' in particular. Azraqī, for instance, distinguishes between common folks and 'ahl al-'ilm' and means by the latter term the 'scholars having knowledge of Islamic theology'. Thus while giving a description of a certain place he remarks, "This is the spot where the Prophet had prayed and the people (an-nās) and the scholars (ahl al-'ilm) have all along been praying at the same place."<sup>3</sup>

Azraqī uses the expression 'ahl al-'ilm'<sup>4</sup> for the scholars of

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<sup>1</sup> Faṣil, 7-b, Tabyīn, ii, 202.

<sup>2</sup> Mohammedanism, 89-90.

<sup>3</sup> Akhbār, ii, 141.

<sup>4</sup> Akhbār, ii, 34, 101, 102, 164, 179.

history and the scholars of traditions alike. Awzā'ī, on the other hand, reserves the term for the scholars of ḥadīth and fiqh. He refers to no one but to the scholars of ḥadīth and fiqh when he says: "wa 'alā dhālika ahl al-'ilm".<sup>1</sup> He makes this statement to justify his viewpoint that two shares were to be allotted for two horses used in the battle - a legal point contested by his contemporary, Abū Yūsuf.

(iv) 'Ilm, meaning, 'ḥadīth': We have seen that the term 'ilm in early times referred to a group of religious disciplines - the Qur'ān, the ḥadīth and the fiqh. With the growing importance of ḥadīth, the term was restricted to this particular discipline. In standard collections of ḥadīth we find separate sections devoted to 'ilm, which contain reports about the merits of ḥadīth learning. The expressions 'ibtighā' l-'ilm and 'ṭalab al-'ilm in classical texts refer to the pursuit of ḥadīth. The phrase 'ṭalab al-'ilm was mainly used in connection with long, arduous journeys from place to place to learn the ḥadīth from well known scholars. Below are cited a few examples where the word 'ilm occurs along with ṭalab, meaning 'acquiring ḥadīth'.

(i) Yazīd b. 'Umayra as-Saksakī, the pupil of Mu'adh b. Jabal, reports that his teacher asked him to acquire 'ilm (an yaṭlub al-'ilm) from four scholars viz 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, 'Abd Allāh b. Sallām, Salmān al-Fārisī, and 'Uwaymir b. Abī d-Dardā'<sup>2</sup> - the notable ḥadīth scholars.

(ii) Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit (d. 119 A.H.) reports: "At first, I

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<sup>1</sup> Siyar, 41-42.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, II, ii, 111.; IV, i, 61 (with slight variation).

acquired ḥadīth (talabtu 'l-ilm) without any intention; then Allāh favoured me with intention as well."<sup>1</sup>

(iii) Ṣāliḥ b. Kaysān, Zuhri's contemporary, is reported as saying: "Zuhri and I got together with the intention of acquiring 'ilm (naṭlub al-ilm) and decided to commit the sunan into writing."<sup>2</sup>

(iv) Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib once saw a Medinese in Mecca and advised him to go back to his town lest he commit some sins in the ḥaram. The latter replied: "In fact I have come here to acquire 'ilm (innamā ji'tu aṭlub al-ilm)".<sup>3</sup>

We have seen that the phrase 'talab al-ilm' in early Islam denoted the acquisition of a particular branch of knowledge, namely the ḥadīth. In other words the term 'ilm' in the above phrase indicated the 'knowledge of ḥadīth' and not 'knowledge in general'.

The titles of the books of Abū Khaythama, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī<sup>4</sup> unequivocally suggest that 'ilm' during their time connoted 'ḥadīth', for the subject matter of these books is 'tradition'. It appears from a report found in Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's Jāmi' that the term 'ilm' was used in the sense of 'ḥadīth' even during 'Umar's time. The report says that the Caliph 'Umar once intended to leave for Iraq when he heard that plague epidemic had broken out there. This news gave rise to a controversial legal issue. There was a difference of opinion as to whether Muslims should enter

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 223. Maṣṣūr b. al-Mu'tamar (d. 132 A.H.) reports the same with slight variation (cf. Tab, VI, 235).

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 106-107.

<sup>3</sup> Akhbār, ii, 107.

<sup>4</sup> These works are respectively entitled as "Kitāb al-ilm", "Jāmi' Bayān al-ilm" and "Taqyīd al-ilm".

such a place or not. In case of entry, they might become victim of the epidemic; refraining from entering meant an escape from God's overpowering authority and fleeing from the fate. The matter was settled when 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. 'Awf came forward and said, "I possess an 'ilm regarding this matter". Then he related the ḥadīth which forbids a Muslim to enter an epidemic-stricken area.<sup>1</sup> The word 'ilm here seems to mean nothing but ḥadīth.

To the same effect is the report which says: "I have an 'ilm regarding this matter ['Iddat] (inna 'indī min hādha 'ilmun)"<sup>2</sup> This 'ilm was nothing but ḥadīth. Similarly, we come across a report where Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.) remarks about a certain ḥadīth, "This 'ilm is not known to any of the Iraqians".<sup>3</sup> He uses the word in the same sense when he comments, "'Ilm meets a social and religious need besides being meritorious as an act of worship."<sup>4</sup>

Even before az-Zuhri, Abū Bakr b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān (d. 94 A.H.) substitutes ḥadīth with 'ilm. 'Ā'isha reports that when she told Abū Bakr b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān about a certain practice of the Prophet,<sup>5</sup> he remarked, "I had not heard this 'ilm before (inna hādha 'l-'ilm mā kuntu sami'tuhū)"<sup>6</sup>

'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar (d. 74 A.H.) also uses the word in this sense

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<sup>1</sup> Bayān, ii, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, ii, 28.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, ii, 28.

<sup>4</sup> Duri, "Al-Zuhri, a study on the beginnings of history writing in Islam", BSOAS, XIX, i, p.8.

<sup>5</sup> The practice of running between Ṣafā and Marwa.

<sup>6</sup> SB, i, 414. ..

when he says, "I shall inform you of this (ritual) on the basis of an 'ilm (sa ukhbiruka...an dhālika bi'ilmin)."<sup>1</sup> That Ibn'Umar, by 'ilm, meant 'ḥadīth' is evident from the fact that after making this statement he quoted a tradition from the Prophet.<sup>2</sup>

The ḥadīth scholar, Abū 'l-Faḍl Sāliḥ b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad at-Tamīmī, while discussing the question of writing and study of 'ḥadīth', remarked that a seeker of ḥadīth should at first write, learn and study the traditions available at his own town. Then, after exhausting the 'ilm of his own town, he should turn to another one in the pursuit of 'ilm.<sup>3</sup> Here he uses 'ḥadīth' and 'ilm synonymously.

In another report, Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd says, "I found people afraid of (averse to) books. (But) had we written them (during Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib's time) we would have possessed a record of Sa'īd's 'ilm (i.e. ḥadīth related by him) and his ra'y (i.e. legal decisions)."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, it is said, "whosoever hears an 'ilm should treat it as a hujja between himself and the Prophet."<sup>5</sup>

Again, the ḥadīth critic, Ibn al-Madīnī takes the term 'ilm in the sense of ḥadīth when he says, "One half of the 'ilm (ḥadīth study) consists of the knowledge about its narrators (ma'rifat ar-rijāl)."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 991.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 991.

<sup>3</sup> Dimashq, 46.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, V, 104.

<sup>5</sup> Ma'rifat, 63.

<sup>6</sup> Buhūth, 29.

That 'ilm referred to the 'ḥadīth' is evident from the following report as well: Baqīyyab. al-Walīd is reported as saying, "Buḥayr handed over to me the book of Khālīd b. Ma'dān al-Kalā'ī which contained his 'ilm."<sup>1</sup> The 'book of Khālīd' evidently refers to his ḥadīth collection.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is clear that the term ''ilm' has been used here as a synonym of 'ḥadīth'.

Here are a few more examples where the word 'ilm has been used to denote the ḥadīth:

- (i) Mālik says, "I saw 'ilm being read out to Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhri."<sup>2</sup>
- (ii) Ma'mar is reported as saying, "I read out 'ilm to Zuhri."<sup>3</sup>
- (iii) Ma'mar reports that ''ilm used to be read out to Ayyūb ."<sup>4</sup>
- (iv) Ḥasan b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān says, "An 'ilm without accompanying isnād is like a house without roof and tent ropes (pillars)."<sup>5</sup>
- (v) Mujāhid (d. 103) is said to have disliked the writing down of 'ilm into note books.<sup>6</sup>
- (vi) While tracing the development of tradition literature, ar-Rāmhurmuzī uses the expression ''ilm' to indicate the 'ḥadīth'.<sup>7</sup>
- (vii) It is reported that Abū Qilāba and Abū 'l Milḥ used to write down the 'ilm.<sup>8</sup>
- (viii) of Zuhri, it is said, "The first to compile the 'ilm (awwal man dawwana 'l-'ilm) was Zuhri."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maṣāḥif, 134-135.

<sup>2</sup> Kifāya, 387.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 388, 411.

<sup>4</sup> Kifāya, 387.

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 253.

<sup>6</sup> SD, i, 121.

<sup>7</sup> Fāsil, 79a, 79b.

<sup>8</sup> Fāsil, 35a.

<sup>9</sup> Bayān, i, 73; 76.; Khiṭaṭ, ii, 333.; Safwat, ii, 78.; Taḥdīth, 46.



(ix) In his letter to the people of Medina, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz says: "Look up to whatever ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allāh there might be and commit it into writing, for I fear the extinction of 'ilm and the passing away of the 'ulamā.'"<sup>1</sup>

(x) Anas b. Mālik asked his sons to 'fetter the 'ilm into writing'.<sup>2</sup>

(xi) Makḥūl, who is reputed for his journeys in quest of the traditions, says, "I did not leave Egypt till I believed that I had heard the 'ilm of every one there. Then I came to Medina, where I stayed until I finished hearing the 'ilm of every (scholar)."<sup>3</sup>

(xii) It is reported that Abū Dharr was 'avaricious with regard to his religion and greedy about 'ilm (ḥarīṣan 'ala' l-'ilm)."<sup>4</sup>

(xiii) Sufyān b. Sa'īd advises his sons in these words: "Study and learn this 'ilm; when you have learnt it (properly), memorise it; after you have memorised it, act upon it; and when you yourself have acted upon it, transmit it to others."<sup>5</sup>

(xiv) Ibn Sīrīn had said of ḥadīth: "Verily, this 'ilm is a religion; so be careful as from whom you receive it."<sup>6</sup>

(xv) When Umāma al-Bāhili (d. 86 A.H.) was asked by Ḥasan b. Jābir about writing down of 'ilm, the former replied that there was no harm in it.<sup>7</sup>

(xvi) Ibn Sa'd reports of 'Abd Allāh b. Al-Mubārak: "He had acquired and narrated a large number of traditions and wrote many

<sup>1</sup> Fāṣil, 35b.; ṢB, i, 37 ('ilm).

<sup>2</sup> 'ilm, 10a.; Fāṣil, 34b.

<sup>3</sup> 'ilm, 5a.; Tab, VII, ii, 160.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, IV, i, 170-171.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VI, 258.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, VII, i, 141.; Fāṣil, 42a. The same statement is attributed to Mālik b. Anas, with the addition: "Although I heard from seventy ḥadīth teachers who gave lectures in the Prophet's mosque, I collected nothing from them (for they were not reliable)". (cf. Kifāya, 248.). The statement is also ascribed to Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim (cf. Fāṣil, 42a.).

<sup>7</sup> Tab, VII, ii, 137.

books on traditions (fī abwāb al-‘ilm)...He came to Iraq, Hijaz, Syria, Egypt and Yemen and heard much ‘ilm (sami‘a ‘ilman kathīran).<sup>1</sup>

(xvii) Of Khālīd b. Dīnār's three sons, it is reported that all of them possessed the ‘ilm which they narrated to others.<sup>2</sup>

(xviii) It is said that Ḥaḥḥāk b. ‘Uthmān and Muḥḥira b. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān had acquired the ‘ilm which they transmitted (to others).<sup>3</sup>

(xix) Of Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥunayn it is reported that he was from amongst the narrators of ‘ilm, from whom Zuhri and others transmitted traditions.<sup>4</sup>

The meaning of ‘ilm, as synonymous of ḥadīth, becomes quite clear when viewed in context of ra’y - a considered, personal opinion or ijtihād. Ibn Sa‘d reports on the authority of Ibn Jurayj that whenever ‘Aṭā’ b. Rabāḥ related anything, Ibn Jurayj (d. 150 A.H.) used to ask if it was ‘ilm or ra’y. In case of ḥadīth he used the word ‘ilm; in case of personal opinion, ra’y.<sup>5</sup> Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, in his Jāmi‘, mentions several traditions in which a clear distinction is made between ‘ilm and ra’y. In these reports the word ‘ilm has been used to indicate ḥadīth.<sup>6</sup>

Wensinck in his Muslim Creed draws the clear distinction between the two and remarks: "In the language of tradition ‘ilm is used in the sense of religious knowledge especially in connection with ḥadīth itself, whereas theological knowledge, apart from ḥadīth,

<sup>1</sup> Tab, VII, ii, 104-105,

<sup>2</sup> Tab, V, 306.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 89.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, V, 211.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, II, ii, 134.; V, 345.; Bayān, ii, 30-31.

<sup>6</sup> Bayān, ii, 28-31, 33, 34.

would simply be brain work (ra'y)."<sup>1</sup> Petersen, also makes this distinction and says, "By knowledge 'ilm, especially in relation to religious matters, the Arab does not generally mean the result of independent reasoning but merely the ability to cite some competent authority - the Qūran's commandment or the transmission (ḥadīth) of the Prophet or his companions' practice (sunna)."<sup>2</sup>

5. 'Athar' and 'ḥadīth': 'Athar' (pl. Āthār) is another important term which was used in early Islam to denote 'ḥadīth'. Literally it means a 'mark' or 'remains', as in the verse of al-Aḥwaṣ:

"bashaṛ un law yadibbu dharr un 'alayhi  
kāna fīhi min mashyihī āthārū"<sup>3</sup>

(Even if an ant crawls on him, her movement  
leaves marks (āthār) on his (tender) body.)

The remains of old dwelling houses, where sweet-hearts of Arab poets used to live, were also known as 'Āthār'. Labīd, for instance, says,  
"lā 'ayna minhu wa lā athar"<sup>4</sup>

'Athar' also means 'foot-step' or 'imprint'.<sup>5</sup> The Prophet uses it in this sense and says, "There never had been a prophet without having followers and companions who follow his (prophet's) foot-steps (yutbi'ūna atharahū) and are guided by his teachings."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Creed, 111. .

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Agh, iv, 251.

<sup>4</sup> Mst, ii, 8/21, n.3.

<sup>5</sup> Sīra, 331.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad (Sh), vi, 187.

From these meanings, perhaps, the term 'athar' was employed to mean ḥadīth. Ḥadīth is nothing but a repository of Muḥammad's teachings. As the 'remains' (records) of Muḥammad's words and deeds were preserved in the form of ḥadīth, it was aptly known as 'athar'. As regards the other literal meaning - 'foot-step' - it can be said that since the Prophet during his lifetime was followed in every walk of life, his conduct was rightly called an 'athar' - a synonym of ḥadīth. After the Prophet's death, the companions, by emulating his example, adopted the path trodden by the Prophet. Thus the expression 'athar' meant the footsteps of the Prophet and became synonym of ḥadīth.

Technically speaking, 'athar' is used for traditions related by companions, successors, and the successors' followers.<sup>1</sup> The scholars of Khurasan, however, restrict the term mainly for the traditions from the companions.<sup>2</sup> This technical definition is of late origin. In the beginning it was used in a general sense and included, therefore, the traditions related by the Prophet as well.<sup>3</sup> A striking example for this meaning of the term is Kitāb al-Āthār of Abū Yūsuf which contains the traditions not only of the companions but also of the Prophet.

The reservation of the term 'athar' for traditions from the companions belongs to the time of Ash-Shāfi'ī, who distinguishes it from the traditions coming from the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> Prior to ash-Shāfi'ī, it was a general term for traditional material as a whole. To take

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdīth, 36.; Tawjīh, 93.

<sup>2</sup> Tadrīb, 4.; Tawjīh, 3.; Dustūr, i, 37.; Tāj, iii, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Khiṭaṭ, ii, 332.; Tahdīth, 36.; Tawjīh, 3.; Tadrīb, 4.

<sup>4</sup> OMJ, 16.

an instance, it is said of Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib: "He was the best informed person about 'athar' and the most intelligent in his ra'y (a'lam an-nās bimā tacaddamahū min al-āthār wa afaqahum fī ra'yihī)."<sup>1</sup> The word 'athar' used here refers to the traditions in general and not only to those coming from the companions alone.

Ibn al-Muqaffa' also takes 'athar' in the sense of traditions in general. Writing during the caliphate of al-Manṣūr (136-158 A.H.) he says, "No one but the caliph has the right to use 'ra'y' in matters of military and civil administration and generally on all such matters on which there were no āthār (traditions)."<sup>2</sup>

Abū Aṣma too uses the term 'athar' in the sense of 'ḥadīth in general' when he asks Abū Ḥanīfa as from whom he should hear the 'āthār'.<sup>3</sup> His question does not appear to refer to the traditions of the companions alone, rather it has been used in a general sense.

Ibn Sīrīn also uses the word 'athar' in the sense of 'ḥadīth in general'. Describing the practice of Abū Bakr in dealing with legal matters, he reports: "whenever he came across a case about which there was no ruling in the Book of Allāh, or no 'athar' in (Islamic) sunna, he used to say that in such cases I exercise my own opinion. If it proves right, then it is owing to (the help of) God; but if it is wrong, then it is due to me, for which I ask forgiveness from Allāh".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tab, V, 90.

<sup>2</sup> War and Peace, 29,n, citing Ibn al-Muqaffa', Rasā'il fī 's-ṣaḥāba, in Rasā'il al-Bulaghā (ed. Kurd 'Alī, 3rd ed., Cairo, 1964), pp.121-122.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 203.

<sup>4</sup> Khulafā', 105.; Tab, III, i, 126.

We find several references of 'athar' in Kitāb al-Hujaj of Shaybānī, where it is used in its general sense of tradition. To take for example, while opposing qiyās (anology) to traditions, Shaybānī remarks that there can be no qiyās in presence of āthār,<sup>1</sup> implying that qiyās can be employed only in such cases where no specific ruling can be found in the traditions. The word 'āthār' in this report has been evidently used in the sense of aḥādīth i.e. the traditions in general.

Abū Yūsuf also uses it in this sense, when he remarks, "Qiyās is distinguished from 'athar' on the one hand and istiḥsān on the other."<sup>2</sup>

Even Shāfi'ī who, as a rule, reserves the term 'athar' for the traditions of the companions, sometimes uses it for 'ḥadīth in general'. This is clearly evident when he compares ḥadīth with fiqh and kalām (scholastic theology). When he makes a distinction between the lawyers, traditionists and scholars of scholastic theology, he uses the terms ḥadīth and athar indiscriminately. While the lawyers and scholars of scholastic theology have been expressed by the terms 'ahl al-fiqh'<sup>3</sup> and 'ahl al-kalām'<sup>4</sup> respectively, the traditionists are mentioned not only as 'aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth'<sup>5</sup> and 'ahl al-ḥadīth'<sup>6</sup> but also as 'ahl al-āthār'.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hujaj (Sh), 46.

<sup>2</sup> Kharāj, 182, 189, and passim.

<sup>3</sup> Ikhtilāf, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Jimā 'l-Ilm, 256.

<sup>5</sup> Ikhtilāf, 91.

<sup>6</sup> Ikhtilāf, 338.

<sup>7</sup> Radd Shaybānī, 283.

Ḥadīth and Aṭhar being similar in meaning, the active participles muhaddith and āthārī are synonymously used to mean 'narrator of ahādīth'.<sup>1</sup>

Like ilm, athar is also used in contradistinction with juristic decision or ra'y. We have seen 'Aṭā' b. Rabāh's remark on this point, who uses athar against ra'y and names the former as ilm<sup>2</sup> - a synonymous term for ḥadīth.

6. Hikma and ḥadīth: The word 'hikma', meaning 'wisdom', occurs both in pre-Islamic and post Islamic literature. In pagan poetry the term was used for 'wise sayings' and 'words of wisdom'. To take an example, when Aṣma'ī, a mukhadrimī poet, heard a certain poem (qaṣīda) of Suwayd b. Abī Kāhil, he remarked: "The Arabs count it as a piece of wisdom (ya'uddūnahū min ḥikamihi)."<sup>3</sup>

In the post-Islamic period, once when 'Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn narrated the Prophetic ḥadīth "modesty brings nothing but good", Bishr b. Ka'b said: "It is written in the 'hikma' as well", whereupon 'Imrān retorted: "I am relating a ḥadīth from the Prophet and you tell me what is in your ṣahīfa."<sup>4</sup> The Prophet himself uses 'hikma' in its literal sense of 'word of wisdom' when he says, "Acquire 'al-ḥikma' even if it comes from the tongue of polytheists."<sup>5</sup> To take one more instance from early Islam, it is reported that hearing a witty reply from 'Adī b. Ḥātim, Mu'āwiya said to his courtier,

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<sup>1</sup> Tadrib, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, II, ii, 134.; V, 345.

<sup>3</sup> Mufaḍ, 190.

<sup>4</sup> SB, iv, 139 (Adab).

<sup>5</sup> Icd, ii, 106.



Ḥabīb b. Maslama, "write this in your book since it is a 'ḥikma'".<sup>1</sup>

'Hikma' has been well defined as 'to know the truth of things as they are and to act according to the requirements thereof'.<sup>2</sup> In other words it is propriety of judgement together with propriety of conduct. It is in this sense that theologians have used the term. The Qur'ān, on eight occasions<sup>3</sup>, speaks of the 'ḥikma' in connection with the 'kitāb', while on other occasions it is used separately. In all these eight places, 'kitāb' refers to the Qur'ān, but what does 'ḥikma' signify? It must necessarily signify something other than the Qur'ān since the word 'ḥikma' is separated from the 'kitāb' by conjunctive particle 'wa'.

Shāfi'ī discusses at length the use of 'ḥikma' and 'kitāb' and concludes by saying that by al-kitāb is meant the Qur'ān, whereas 'ḥikma' denotes the 'sunna of the Prophet'.<sup>4</sup> To the same effect is the verdict of Qatāda (d. 117/118 A.H.). Explaining the verse 'mā yutlā fī buyūtikunna min ayāt Allāh wa'l-ḥikma' (33:34) he says, "Āyāt Allah refers to the Qur'ān whereas ḥikmah means 'as-sunna'".<sup>5</sup> Perhaps, Shāfi'ī had borrowed the interpretation of 'ḥikma' as 'sunna', from Qatāda, for the former says, "I have heard the scholars of the Qur'ān (Qatāda was one of them) as saying that 'ḥikma' meant 'sunna of the Prophet'".<sup>6</sup> The fact, however, remains that it was

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<sup>1</sup> 'Iqd, iv, 110.

<sup>2</sup> Lexicon, I, ii, 617.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 2:129.; 2:151.; 2:231.; 3:48.; 3:81.; 4:54.; 4:113.; 5:110.

<sup>4</sup> Risāla, 24.; Jimā' al-ʿilm, 247.

<sup>5</sup> Ṭab, VIII, 144.

<sup>6</sup> Risāla, 24.



only after Shāfi'ī that 'ḥikma' was fully equated with 'sunna' by common agreement. Since Shāfi'ī does not make a clear-cut distinction between ḥadīth and sunna, we can say that ḥikma was used by him as equivalent to 'ḥadīth'.

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī also appears to have used this term in the sense of ḥadīth. In his famous letter to the caliph 'Abd al-Malik, he refers to the pious forbears and says that they had "acted according to the commands of Allāh, had narrated His 'ḥikma' (rawū ḥikmatahū), and followed the sunna of the Messenger of Allāh...."<sup>1</sup>

The word 'ḥikma' used here with 'sunna' and 'commands of Allah', coupled with the expression 'rawū' (they narrated), clearly indicates that 'ḥikma' to Ḥasan meant the 'ḥadīth'.

7. Fiqh and ḥadīth: Technically, the term 'fiqh' is applied to the specialised knowledge of legal laws of Islam as framed and deduced from the Qur'ān, the ḥadīth and the personal ijtihād of early theologians. It comprises in its scope 'all aspects of religious, political and civil life'.<sup>2</sup>

Literally, it denotes 'knowledge', 'insight' or 'understanding'. The word in all these senses occurs both in the Qur'ān and in the traditions. Thus Wensinck's remark that 'fiqh in the sense of "insight" does not occur in the Kuran'<sup>3</sup> is unacceptable to us.

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<sup>1</sup> Der Islam, XXI, 68.

<sup>2</sup> Med. Islam, 145.

<sup>3</sup> Creed, 110.

We quote a few instances to show that the verbal forms of 'fiqh' have been used both in the sense of 'understanding' and 'insight' in the Qur'ān. As for the first meaning the Qur'ān says, "Till when he (Dhū 'l-Qarnayn) came between the two mountains, he found upon their hither side a folk that scarce could understand (lā yakādūn yafqahūn) a saying"<sup>1</sup> (for they spoke a different language and could not understand Iranian language - the language of Dhū 'l-Qarnayn). Similarly, Moses prays to God for granting him clarity of expression so that the people of Pharaoh - to whom he was being sent - could understand his message. He says, "My Lord! Relieve my mind. And ease my task for me; And loose a knot from my tongue, that they may understand my saying (yafqahū qawlī)."<sup>2</sup>

The verb 'fiqh' in the following passage also means 'to understand'. Speaking about the polytheists, the Qur'ān says, "Of them are some who listen unto thee, but we have placed upon their hearts veils, lest they should understand (an yafqahūhu)..."<sup>3</sup> In a similar passage in connection with disbelievers, it is said: "And who doth greater wrong than he who hath been reminded of the revelations of his Lord, yet turneth away from them and forgetteth what his hands send forward (to the Judgement)? Lo! on their hearts we have placed covering so that they understand not (an yafqahūhu) and in their ears a deafness...."<sup>4</sup> In the following passage, too, the verbal form 'yafqahūna' denotes 'understanding'. The passage reads: "Already have we urged unto Hell many of the

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 18:94

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 20:25-28.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 6:25

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 18:58.

jinn and humankind, having hearts wherewith they understand not (lā yafcahūna bihā) and having eyes wherewith they see not, and having ears wherewith they hear not. These are as the cattle - nay but they were worse! These are the neglectful."<sup>1</sup>

Apart from its usage in the Qur'ān, the word in the sense of 'knowledge', 'comprehension' or 'understanding' occurs in the ḥadīth literature also. To take, for example, the caliph 'Umar used to say, "Tafaqqahū qabl an tasūdū"<sup>2</sup>, meaning 'develop (fully) your faculty of comprehension and understanding before you are chosen as leaders'.

The word in this literal sense also occurs in the Sīra of Ibn Hishām.<sup>3</sup>

We have seen the usage of 'fiqh' in the Qur'ān in the literal sense of 'understanding'. But the word also occurs there to denote a faculty of 'insight'. Using the word 'fiqh' in its verbal form, the Qur'ān says, "And the believers should not all go out to fight. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion (liyatafaqqaḥū fī'd-dīn)."<sup>4</sup> The word 'tafaqquḥ' used here, clearly refers to 'have a thorough knowledge of, and insight into, the 'dīn' (religion).

<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 7:179.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ilm, 2b.

<sup>3</sup> Sīra, 961.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 9:122.

The traditional material also uses the word 'fiqh' in the sense of 'insight' and 'thorough knowledge'. To take, for <sup>example,</sup> instance, the Prophet said, "When Allāh intends to do good to his servants, He gives them insight and understanding in religion (yufaqqih-hu fī 'd-dīn) and informs him of his weaknesses."<sup>1</sup> In another report it is said: "For every thing (buildings) there are pillars; the pillar of this religion (Islam) is fiqh i.e. thorough knowledge and insight to interpret the Qur'ān and the sunna".<sup>2</sup>

Historically speaking, 'fiqh', in the beginning, meant 'knowledge' of any kind, but used in context of religion it referred to insight into religious teachings.<sup>3</sup> This is clear from a report by Abū Hurayra who quotes the Prophet as saying: "Men are like mines; the best (men) of Jāhiliyya period remain as best men of Islam if they acquire insight in religion (idhā faqahū)."<sup>4</sup>

We find a report in Wāqidi's Maghāzī where Mu'adh b. Jabal is reported to have instructed his emissary not only to teach the Meccans the Qur'ān and inform them of God's benevolence over Muslims but also asked him to invest them (the Meccans) with thorough knowledge of this religion (wa yufaqqih an-nās fī 'd-dīn).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Muhāḍarāt, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Muhāḍarāt, 16.

<sup>3</sup> In Ghazālī's opinion 'the fiqh in early Islam referred to the knowledge of the Hereafter and other related matters'. He derives this definition of fiqh from the Qur'ānic verse 'liyatafaqqahū fī 'd-dīn wa liyundhirū...' (9:122). Stressing on the verb 'indhār' used here, he says that this indhār (warning) refers to matters other than the branches of (technical) 'fiqh'. (cf. Zunūn, 1281).

<sup>4</sup> SB, ii, 340, 348, 350 (Anbiyā'), 381 (Manāqib).; Masnad (Ṭ), x, 324.; Bayān, i, 18-19.

<sup>5</sup> Magh, 423.

Another report of Wāqidī says that a few men from 'Adal and Qāra tribes called on the Prophet and asked for a teacher who could not only teach them the Qur'ān but also bestow them with insight and deep knowledge about Islam (yucrī 'ūnanā 'l-Qur'ān wa yufqihūnanā fī 'l-Islām)."<sup>1</sup>

'Fiqh' in early Islam was a process of understanding and deducing. This 'faculty' was needed to interpret the Qur'ān and the existing 'ilm or ḥadīth for legal purposes. A 'faqīh', the possessor of this faculty, was one who could interpret the Qur'ān and the traditions and frame laws on the basis of his insight into religious knowledge.

Although fiqh, as an independent discipline, developed much later, due attention was paid to it even in earlier times. Thus Masrūq reports that 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Zayd b. Thābit and 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd used to discuss legal matters among themselves.'<sup>2</sup> It is also reported that a group of people (qawm) was once found discussing 'fiqh' (yatadhākarūn al-fiqh) during the Prophet's lifetime.<sup>3</sup> It is further said that 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. 'Awf, Mu'ādh b. Jabal, Ubayy b. Ka'b and Zayd b. Thābit used to give juristic rulings during Abū Bakr's caliphate (wa kullu hā'ulā'i yuftī fī knīlafat Abī Bakr).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Magh, 345.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, II, ii, 110.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad (Ṭ), ix, 298.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, II, ii, 109.

"With the establishment of Islamic methodology", says Fazlur Rahman,... "a radical change took place in the nature of fiqh which passed from being a personal activity to mean a structural discipline and its resultant body of knowledge." "This body of knowledge", he continues, "was thus standardized and established as an objective system.... Whereas in the first stage one used to say 'one should exercise fiqh'.. the proper thing to say now was 'one should "learn" or "study" fiqh'."<sup>1</sup>

It should, however, be pointed out that in early Islam, 'fiqh', like 'ilm' comprised the composite knowledge of the Qur'ān, the ḥadīth and the fiqh, and the scholars of these disciplines were indiscriminately known as 'ulamā' (the possessors of 'ilm') and 'fuqahā' (the possessors of 'fiqh'). Thus there was no marked distinction between 'ḥadīth' and 'fiqh' in this early period. That is why, very often the latter term was used to denote the former one. This is apparent from the following ḥadīth, reported on the authority of Zayd b. Thābit: "The Prophet said, 'May Allān brighten a man who heard my saying, retained it, and then passed it on to others; for many a bearer of 'fiqh' is not versed in 'fiqh', and many a bearer of 'fiqh' conveys it to one who is more versed than he is.'"<sup>2</sup> We can very well see that the word 'fiqh' in this report has been used to denote the Prophet's saying i.e. ḥadīth.

Despite the fact that 'fiqh' and 'ilm' (or ḥadīth) were sometimes interchangeable, the 'fiqh' was wider in scope; and in this early

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<sup>1</sup> Islam, (R), 103.

<sup>2</sup> SAD, iii, 438 ('ilm'), ḥadīth no. 3660.; Jāmi, x, 124 ('ilm').; SIL, i, 102 (Introduction).

period (as in later times too) the knowledge of ḥadīth was indispensable for a faqīh. This is borne out by the fact that the companions like 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh, Abū Hurayra and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, who reported a large number of aḥādīth, are described as faqīh<sup>1</sup> and not muḥaddith. The caliph 'Umar seems using the term 'fiqh' in this wide sense when he says: "Whosoever wants the knowledge of fiqh should go to Mu'ādh b. Jabal."<sup>2</sup> By 'fiqh' he appears to mean 'religious knowledge in general' and not a separate discipline which had yet to develop.

However, in the early second century, the distinction between ḥadīth and fiqh was clearly drawn. Thus Sha' bī says of Ibn 'Umar that the latter was expert in ḥadīth (jayyid al-ḥadīth) but not in fiqh (jayyid al-fiqh).<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Qāsim b. Ma'n is said to be "a reliable authority on ḥadīth, fiqh, shī'r and ayyām an-nās".<sup>4</sup> Again, Ḥākim relates on the authority of 'Abbās b. Muṣ'ab who said: "'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak's Jāmi' contains ḥadīth, fiqh, Arabic (language), ayyām an-nās (history), bravery, tradesmanship, generosity and love towards varying sects and groups."<sup>5</sup>

8. Other related terms for ḥadīth: Alongside 'sunna', 'athar', 'ilm' and 'fiqh', there existed some other terms which were closely related to 'ḥadīth'. Among these may be mentioned 'khabar', 'ra'y' and 'mathal', to which we now turn.

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, II, ii, 127.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, II, ii, 108.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, II, ii, 125.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, VI, 267.

<sup>5</sup> Ma'rifat, 66.



(i) Khabar:

Literally, 'Khabar' means 'news', 'report' or 'information', irrespective of its nature or source. Akhbār, the plural of 'khabar' is used for history proper and includes historical legends of all kinds. 'Ḥadīth', which consists of reports about the sayings, practices and approbations of the Prophet, also falls under the scope of 'khabar' which is wider in scope than the ḥadīth. While 'ḥadīth' in its scope revolves round the personality of the Prophet and deals with matters emanating from him, 'khabar' is wide enough to include all sorts of information from whatever source. Some authorities confine the term 'ḥadīth' to only religious or exegetical traditions, calling historical traditions by the more general term 'khabar'. Thus, whosoever engages himself in tradition is called 'muḥaddith', and the one who devotes himself to the study of history and similar such discipline is known as 'akhbārī'.<sup>1</sup>

While 'ḥadīth' has been given specific technical meaning of the saying of the Prophet - an abbreviation of the phrase 'ḥadīth an-nabī',<sup>2</sup> 'khabar' is used for narratives or related information coming from sources other than the Prophet.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of the above difference in meaning between 'ḥadīth' and 'khabar', they were often used synonymously.<sup>4</sup> Ṭabarī provides us

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdīth, 36.; Tawjih, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, i, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Tawjih, 3.; Tadrīb, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, ii, 176, where Ibn 'Abd al-Barr reports Abu Ja'far as saying, "verily, the 'khabar' and the 'ḥadīth' are the same thing (anna 'l-akhbār wa'l-ḥadīth wāhid)."<sup>1</sup> Abu Ja'far bases his argument on a verse of the Qur'ān and says, "The Qur'ānic verse 'yawma'idhin tuḥaddithu akhbārahā' (99:4) makes the 'ḥadīth' and 'khabar' synonymous.

with an example where he uses 'khavar' in the sense of 'ḥadīth'. He says: "A tradition (khavar) is reported from the Prophet which confirms the view (qawl) of one who holds that the world will last for 6000 years." After this he quotes a confirmatory ḥadīth, followed by his (Ṭabarī's) own comment: "Thus he (the Prophet) has clearly stated in this khavar (tradition) that the world will last for six thousand years."<sup>1</sup>

Ghazālī, in his Iḥyā', uses the plural 'Akhbār' in the sense of 'aḥādīth'. In order to show the merits of 'ilm' he quotes first the verses from the Qur'ān and then the traditions from the Prophet. Before quoting the latter he remarks, "As regards the akhbār, the Prophet said....."<sup>2</sup>

Even at a time when 'ḥadīth' was developed into a formal discipline, the term khavar applied to at least one category of ḥadīth. The 'science of ḥadīth' (ulūm al-ḥadīth) divides the traditions into 'marfū''<sup>3</sup> and 'mawqūf'.<sup>4</sup> While the term 'ḥadīth' was reserved for the 'marfū'' type of 'aḥādīth', 'khavar' was a general term for both 'marfū'' and 'mawqūf' aḥādīth. Hence the saying, 'Every 'ḥadīth' is 'khavar' but that every 'khavar' is not a 'ḥadīth'.<sup>5</sup>

The scholars of Khurasan go a step further and bring 'khavar'

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<sup>1</sup> Annales, i, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Iḥyā', i, 5.

<sup>3</sup> A tradition traced to the Prophet, with or without a complete isnād.

<sup>4</sup> A tradition going back only to a companion.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdīth, 36.; Tawjīh, 3.

at par with 'ḥadīth of the Prophet'. They also distinguish between 'mawqūf' and 'marfū' aḥādīth. ~~②~~ The former they call 'athar'; ~~③~~ the latter, 'khabar'.<sup>1</sup> In this way, 'ḥadīth' comes parallel to 'khabar'.

Rosenthal, however, holds that the two terms are not interchangeable. He asks logically: "if every 'khabar' could not be a 'ḥadīth' - although the opposite was possible - how could then both be interchanged?"<sup>2</sup>

(ii) Ra'y:

Another related term of 'ḥadīth' is 'ra'y', which has frequently been used in contradistinction with the former. Right from the earliest period, 'ilm' and 'ra'y' were used to mean the 'ḥadīth' and 'ijtihād' (personal reasoning) respectively. Thus we find 'Abd al-Malik asking Ḥasan Baṣrī whether the doctrine of free will advocated by the latter, was derived from the Qur'ān, or from the traditions (riwāya) of the companions of the Prophet, or else from his (logical) personal reasoning (ra'yin ra'aytahū).<sup>3</sup>

We can very well see that the term 'ra'y' in the above report has been used against 'riwāya' (the narration) or transmitted tradition. We have already seen that one of the terms for 'tradition' in early Islam was 'ilm'. It appears that the word 'riwāya' has been used here as a synonym of 'ilm' and 'ḥadīth'. Thus, it can be

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<sup>1</sup> Tadrīb, 4.; Tawjīh, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, i, 4,n, where Nabia Abbott disagrees with Rosenthal and says: "Rosenthal...has nevertheless fallen into.. error."

<sup>3</sup> Der Islam, XXI (1933), p.67.

said that ra'y and 'ilm in earlier times referred respectively to the logical reasoning or ijtihād and transmitted tradition or ḥadīth. We find two reports in Ṭabarī's Annales where the phrases 'aḥḍirūnī 'ilmakum'<sup>1</sup> (bring to me any tradition known to you) and 'aḥḍirūnī 'r-ra'y'<sup>2</sup> (give me your opinion) occur as terminological counterparts. As for the former, it referred to a matter relating to the distribution of booty. It is reported that 'Umar on the conclusion of a certain battle asked his people to apprise him of their 'ilm (i.e. known tradition) concerning the distribution of the spoils of war. It is evident that 'ilm in the above expression means the 'ḥadīth of the Prophet'.

On the other hand, the term 'ra'y', in the phrase 'aḥḍirūnī 'r-ra'y' means 'individual considered opinion' on a matter where no law existed in the Qur'ān and in the ḥadīth.

Goldziher, in his article on 'Fiqh' in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, has clearly pointed out that ''ilm and ra'y are counterparts.' He, however, unjustly denies the usage of 'ra'y' in early Islam. Against Goldziher's view, we find mention of these opposite terms in Ṭabarī's Annales and in Ibn Hishām's Sīra. Ṭabarī reports that on the occasion of the conquest of Palestine, 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ wrote to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb seeking the caliph's opinion (Ra'y) on some problem. On receipt of this letter, continues Ṭabarī, 'Umar commented, "Amr had not acted (or was not prepared to act) but in accordance with 'ilm'<sup>3</sup>. The words 'ra'y' and ''ilm' in this report mean,

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<sup>1</sup> Annales, i, 2417.

<sup>2</sup> Annales, i, 2213-2214.

<sup>3</sup> Annales, i, 2401.

respectively, the independent personal reasoning and ḥadīth.

Even much earlier, we find mention of these contradictory terms in a verse ascribed to Ḥassān b. Thābit. In his famous elegy on the death of the Prophet, the poet says:

"Tanāhat wasāt al-muslimīna bikaffihī

Fa lā 'l-'ilm maḥbūsun wa lā 'r-rayu yufnadū"<sup>1</sup>

(i.e. the muslims have resorted to his (Muḥammad's) knowledge.

From him no 'ilm was withheld and no ra'y was denied.)

Ḥassān, in these lines, seems to mean by 'ilm and ra'y, the 'ḥadīth of the Prophet' and 'the independent personal opinions of the companions' respectively.

Again, on the occasion of a literary competition between the deputation of Banū Tamīm on the one hand and the party of Muḥammad on the other, 'Uṭārid b. Ḥājib gave a speech and challenged Muḥammad of producing a better one if he could. The Prophet accepted the challenge and called Thābit b. Qays al-Anṣārī to answer the opponent. Thābit thereupon carried out the Prophet's order and began his speech with these words: "Praise belongs to God who created the heavens and the earth and established His rule therein....By His Power he made us kings and chose the best of His creation as an apostle and honoured him with sound opinion and judgement (akramahū wa aḥsanahū ra'yan) and made him truthful in speech (wa aṣḍaqaḥū ḥadīthan) and sent down to him His Book...."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 1024.

<sup>2</sup> Dīwān (H), 43.

The Prophet himself is reported to have used a derivative of ra'y on one occasion. Ibn 'Abbās reports that in the battle of Badr when captives fell into the hands of the muslim army, the Prophet said, "O Abū Bakr, 'Alī and 'Umar! how, in your opinion (mā tarawna), should we deal with these prisoners?"<sup>1</sup>

Ḥubāb b. al-Mundhir b. al-Jamūh, a companion, also uses this verbal form, along with the noun ra'y, in the sense of 'opinion'. It is reported that when the Prophet, in the battle of Badr, reached the nearest springs of Badr (bi adnā miyāh Badr), Ḥubāb said to him, "Is this place, in your opinion, is a place (ara'ayta hādha 'l-manzil amanzilan) where Allāh has asked you to halt, in which case we can neither advance nor withdraw from it, or is it just a personal opinion (ra'y) and military tactics?"<sup>2</sup> The Prophet thereupon replied that his decision was based on his personal opinion (ra'y) and was tactics.<sup>3</sup>

'Ra'y' played an important role with regard to legal matters in early Islam. The two sources of law in this period were the Qur'ān and the 'sunna of the Prophet'. In the absence of these two, the companions were allowed to use their own acumen to decide legal issues. The permission to use ra'y had been given by the Prophet himself to Mu'adh b. Jabal.<sup>4</sup> After the Prophet's death, Abū Bakr and 'Umar decided cases on the basis of ra'y. Abu Bakr is reported to have consulted the 'ahl ar-ra'y' and the 'ahl al-fiqh' in deciding

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<sup>1</sup> Musnad (Shayba), 54.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 439.

<sup>3</sup> Sīra, 439.

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, ii, 55-56.

legal issues.<sup>1</sup> 'Umar, too, sought his colleagues' opinion (ra'y) on matters where no ḥadīth could be found. He had instructed his governors and judges to decide cases on the basis of their individual reasoning in matters where the Qur'ān and the sunna provided no express rulings. Thus in his letter to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, he mentions three sources of law - the Qur'ān, the sunnat muttaba'a (the prevailing sunna) and the fahm (understanding or reason).<sup>2</sup> The order in which this last source of law is placed clearly shows that its place is next to the Qur'ān and the sunna.

Although doubts have been cast on the authenticity of this letter<sup>3</sup>, yet the fact that reference to the text of this letter, though in brief, is given by such an early authority as Abū Yūsuf,<sup>4</sup> leads us to believe that it is genuine. Furthermore, the ḥadīth of Mu'adh provides a circumstantial evidence for the genuineness of this report. 'Umar's instruction to use ra'y in the absence of the Qur'ān and the sunna, is quite in conformity with the Prophet's tacit approval, given to Mu'adh, for the usage of this source of law.

Speaking about the usage of ra'y in early Islam, Bravmann says, "In our opinion it seems..highly probable that already in the earliest period of Islam any governor or judge (or any commander) was expected...to take recourse to his own independent reasoning (ra'y)

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<sup>1</sup> Sunna (Sib), 84.

<sup>2</sup> Subh, x, 194.; Kāmil, i, 14. Schacht says, "The use of ra'y by Mālik is well known....He uses his ra'y on points on which there are no traditions." (cf. OMJ, 115.).

<sup>3</sup> Margoliouth, "Omar's instructions to the Kadi", JRAS, 1910, p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> Kharāj, 117.



in case he would not find guidance in the vast body of practice, norms, and ordinances of the past, which, especially in relation to ra'y, is frequently referred to as 'ilm.'<sup>1</sup>

He not only considers the authenticity of Mu'adh's ḥadīth as 'highly probable' but says unequivocally: "The doubts about the early application of ra'y, which caused Goldziher and Schacht to deny the authenticity of the story concerning Mu'ād b. Gabal and the Prophet,... do not seem to be justified."<sup>2</sup>

Speaking on the sources of Islamic law, Bahīj Sha'bān remarks that recourse to ra'y should be taken as a last resort ('inda zawāl jamī' al-wasā'il).<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Muqaffa' reserves the use of ra'y for caliph alone. He says, "None but the caliph has the right to use ra'y in matters of military and civil administration and generally on all matters on which there were no traditions (āthār)."<sup>4</sup>

In the period of younger companions and successors, the terms 'ahl al-ḥadīth' and 'ahl ar-ra'y' meant respectively 'the collectors of ḥadīth' and 'the interpreters of the traditions'. The former were rightly named as 'pharmacists' while the latter were known as 'physicians'.<sup>5</sup> Thus A'mash, the traditionist, says to Abū Ḥanīfa, "Nahnu as-sayādila wa antum al-aṭibbā'u."<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Zuhri remarks, "Ni'ma wazīr al-ilm ar-ra'y al-hasan."<sup>7</sup>, meaning, "what a good

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<sup>1</sup> Early Islam, 177-178.

<sup>2</sup> Early Islam, 184.

<sup>3</sup> Islām, 117.

<sup>4</sup> Rasā'il, 121-122.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, ii, 131.

<sup>6</sup> Bayān, ii, 131.

<sup>7</sup> Bayan, ii, 33.

helper (aid) of knowledge ('ilm) i.e. ḥadīth is 'sound opinion' (ar-ra'y al-ḥasan).<sup>1</sup> The ra'y or 'independent reasoning' in the above example, is considered as playing the role of interpreter. The good or bad interpretation of ḥadīth depends on the soundness of opinions of ahl ar-ra'y.

The successors had made it a point to enquire whether a reported tradition was the actual report (ḥadīth) of the Prophet or an explanation of the same as based on sound opinion (ra'y). We have already seen how Ibn Jurayj questioned 'Atā' b. Rabāḥ when the latter reported traditions to him.<sup>1</sup>

This is, however, certain that ra'y has all along been used with extreme caution and the companions were not allowed to use it freely. We quote here one example to explain this point. Rafā'a b. Rāfi' reports that a man complained to the caliph 'Umar that Zayd b. Thābit had given a ruling (fatwā) on a certain issue on the basis of his ra'y. Hearing this, 'Umar summoned Zayd and enquired if it was true. Zayd denied the charge, saying that he had based his judgement on something (Shay'an, implying ḥadīth) which he had heard from Ubayy b. Ka'b, Abū Ayyūb and Rafā'a b. Rāfi' - the narrators of ḥadīth.<sup>2</sup>

This report shows that ra'y was resorted to only in the absence of ḥadīth.

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<sup>1</sup> See supra, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Muwāfaqāt, iii, 68.

(iii) Mathal:

Another significant term used in connection with ḥadīth is 'mathal', meaning 'a wise saying' or 'a proverb'. The term mathal, (plural, amthāl) was applicable to the traditions of the Prophet as well. Some of the companions used to memorise or preserve in writing the sayings of the Prophet. Considering them as words of wisdom, they called these sayings 'amthāl'. Thus the term 'mathal', in early Islam, was used as equivalent to 'ḥadīth'. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ uses it in this sense when he says, "I have preserved one thousand mathal from the Prophet."<sup>1</sup> 'Abd Allāh apparently refers in this report to his famous ṣaḥīfa, which contained one thousand traditions. It is clear that he means by 'mathal' the 'ḥadīth' and not 'proverb' - its literal meaning.

Ibn 'Abd Rabbih also uses the word 'mathal', (with its plural 'amthāl') in the sense of 'ḥadīth' when he gives a chapter heading 'Amthāl Rasūl Allāh' and quotes under it a number of aḥādīth from the Prophet<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Uṣd, iii, 233.

<sup>2</sup> 'Icd, iii, 4-7.

## PART TWO

### EARLY DOCUMENTATION OF SUNNA AND ḤADĪTH

In this section, which is divided into three chapters, an attempt has been made to make a systematic study of the question of recording of sunna and ḥadīth.

The section begins with a discussion on the position of writing in general in pre and early Islamic Arabia. In Chapter III, it has been shown that since writing was in vogue both in pre and early Islamic period, the traditions of the Prophet were not only preserved in memory but were also written down by some literate companions and successors. In this context, the contradictory reports regarding the Prophet's prohibition and permission of writing down his traditions have been critically reviewed.

Also discussed in this connection are various terms and statements which, as a result of their misinterpretation, formed the bases of the theory of late recording of ḥadīth. (Chapter IV).

This is followed by a discussion on the meanings and early usages of several terms used as receptacles of ḥadīth. An investigation into this matter showed that the terms ṣaḥīfa and kitāb etc. did not necessarily mean 'small collections' or 'memoranda' of ḥadīth, as is sometimes believed. (Chapter V).

The second part of Chapter V deals solely with the written collections - both large and small - of early hadith scholars.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE TRADITION OF WRITING ḤADĪTH

##### 1. Introduction:

It is generally believed that the traditions could not attain literary fixity until quite late, say till the second or third century after the Prophet's death. Both the Western and Muslim Scholars try to bridge the gap of more than a hundred years by maintaining that traditions reached the compilers of the second or third century through oral transmission from generation to generation. No doubt, the Orientalists, like Sprenger, Muir, Flück, Sachau, Horovitz and Goldziher, admit the existence of few written memoranda of ḥadīth in early Islamic period, they consider these records as merely aids to memory. Muslim scholars hold the same opinion with regard to these written records. But unlike orientalists, they place complete reliance on the memory of the transmitters of ḥadīth, and give very little allowance to fallability of human memory. They believe that the transmission of ḥadīth, from the Prophet's time onwards was mainly oral.

It looks strange to maintain that the traditions remained in the hearts of the companions and successors, and after about a hundred years they were transferred into books. The truth is that although no formal arrangement was made by the Prophet to preserve the traditions in black and white, yet the ahādīth were written down during his own lifetime.

Historically speaking, the recording of traditions in early period was done in a very informal way. While most of the Prophet's actions were watched and imitated, rather than dictated and recorded, a number of formulae (duʿā) were certainly written down to be learnt

by heart and be recited in prayers orally. The brief formulae could be easily memorised without writing, but the lengthy ones had to be written down, not only to memorise but also for future reference lest the believers commit mistakes in their rituals. Sometimes, certain legal matters especially laws regarding zakāt, which were of great importance and had to be exact, were recorded either on the initiative of the Prophet or by the companions themselves. Again, the occasions arose when the companions had to quote the Prophet's sayings or his behaviour in their correspondence. Last but not the least, there existed a group of enthusiastic companions who used to watch every activity of the Prophet, listen to his words and sermons and try to preserve a record of his sayings and actions either orally or by writing them down. The unique personality of the Prophet himself demanded the preservation of his teachings - a task which was successfully accomplished by his devoted companions, who not only learnt his sayings by heart but also recorded them in black and white. "We have evidence of several such Boswells", says Macdonald, "who fixed his (Prophet's) words as they fell."<sup>1</sup>

At this point the question may be asked: 'If the traditions were preserved in black and white, why did they not reach us?' Both negative and positive reply can be given for this question. As for the former, it can be said that the reasons for its non-availability is neither want of writing material as is sometimes claimed, nor its preservation in memory. The positive answer is that the main cause of its non-accessibility to us is the ravage of time which destroyed the papyri and other inferior quality of writing material long before it reached us.

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<sup>1</sup> Muslim Theology, 75.

But before we go any further to discuss the question of writing ḥadīth in particular, it is necessary to see the general position of writing in Arabia on the eve of Islam.

## 2. Position of Arabic writing at the advent of Islam:-

It is generally believed that while Arabic writing in South Arabia had reached its most developed stage as early as in the Tubba' dynasty<sup>1</sup>, the literacy of North Arabia was in a deplorable state, so much so that at the advent of Islam there were only seventeen persons in Mecca who knew how to write<sup>2</sup>, while in Medina the position was rather worse, where less than a dozen persons knew this art<sup>3</sup>.

The above account does not seem to present a complete picture of literacy of pre-Islamic Arabia, especially in the case of Mecca which was a cosmopolitan city, a junction of caravan routes, a religious centre and seat of missionary works of Christians and Jews. In order to have a fairly clear picture of Arabic writing in this region, it is necessary to see how and when it was introduced in Ḥijāz. According to Balādhurī, the people of Ḥijāz learnt this art from the people of Anbār, who in turn had learnt it from the people of Ḥīra, the present Kufa. He traces its history thus: 'At the close of the 5th century, three men of the tribe of Ṭayy named Murāmīr b. Murra, Aslam b. Sidra and 'Amīr b. Jadra invented the Arabic alphabet at Baqqa (near Ḥīra and Hīt) and taught it to the people of Anbār, who in turn taught

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<sup>1</sup> Muqaddima, 418.

<sup>2</sup> Futūḥ, 457.; Iqd, iv, 242-243.

<sup>3</sup> Ḥadīth lit, 41.; Manāhil, i, 356.



it to the people of Ḥīra. One Bishr b. 'Abd al-Malik, who used to frequent Ḥīra, learnt to write Arabic there. Having learnt this art he came to Mecca and taught it to Sufyān b. Umayya and Abū Qays b. 'Abd Manāf.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see that writing was introduced in Ḥijāz through Ḥīra, which was a seat of learning from early times. The well known story of the poets Mutalammis and Ṭarafa of the reign of 'Amr b. Hind (554 - 570 A.D.) shows that writing was common among the Arabs of those days. According to the story, 'Amr b. Hind gave each of these poets a sealed letter asking them to hand it to his officer, Rabī' b. Ḥawthara, in Baḥrayn. Although the poets were made to believe that these were letters of introduction recommending for generous treatments, they contained an order to put the bearers to death. We learn from the story that while Mutalammis, who got suspicious of the contents of the letter and had a youth of Ḥīra read it and thus escaped, the poor Ṭarafa, who refused to open the sealed letter and carried it to Rabī', was mercilessly put to death.<sup>2</sup>

We do not know for certain whether the letters given to these poets were in Arabic, but circumstances suggest that the most probable language in which the letters were written was Arabic. We find that one 'Adī b. Zayd in those days was employing Arabic writing in the Persian Court of Khusraw I.<sup>3</sup> It was most likely, therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> Futūḥ, 456-457.; Wuzarā', i, where it is said that the first to write in Arabic were the above named three persons.; Ma'ārif, 187.

<sup>2</sup> Shi'r, i, 131, 134, 137, 138, 142. Agh (Rudolph), xxi, 194-196.

<sup>3</sup> Arabic Script, 6.; Agh, ii, 101-103.

that Arabic be used in Arab courts of Ḥīra where in fact it was taught and learnt. Ḥammād b. Zayd, for instance, taught his son Arabic language and script first and only later, the Persian.<sup>1</sup> That Arabic was taught in Ḥīra is evident from another report which says that King Bahrām Gūr (420-438 A.D.) who was educated by Mundhir amongst the Arabs of Ḥīra, was instructed in the Persian, Arabic and even Greek languages and writings.<sup>2</sup>

Ḥīra remained a seat of learning until quite late. It is reported that when Khālīd conquered this city, he found young men in monasteries occupied with multiplying scriptures.<sup>3</sup> According to another report, Khālīd saw some people learning the art of writing in Anbār.<sup>4</sup>

In Mecca, we can expect a considerable amount of literacy long before the advent of Islam, for it had been a religious and commercial centre from about 350 A.D. onwards.<sup>5</sup> It is but natural that here some business transactions were made in writing by people who knew this art. History has preserved many such names who could write in the sixth century A.D. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 578 A.D.), the grandfather of the Prophet, is one such example. He is reported to have once written from Mecca to his maternal relatives in Medina to go and help him obtain possession of his paternal estate in Mecca.<sup>6</sup> A document in the handwriting of the same 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib is reported to have been found in the treasury of al-Māmūn.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Agh, ii, 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> History of Persia, i, 262.

<sup>3</sup> 'Origin of writing...', JASB, (1856), 375-376.; Maṣādir, 51.

<sup>4</sup> Maṣādir, 51.

<sup>5</sup> Arabic Script, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Mahomet, i, pp. viii, ccliv, n.; Annales, i, 1084-1088.

<sup>7</sup> Fihrist, 7.

Even before 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, his great grandfather, Qusayy had written a letter to his own brother Rizāh.<sup>1</sup>

Despite prevalence of Arabic writing in Ḥijāz, the Muslim historians, influenced by traditional view that the period before Islam was lacking in any cultural achievement whatsoever and calling it 'the days of ignorance', put forward the theory that the literates at the advent of Islam were so few that they could be counted on finger-tips. Dr. Ḥamīdullah, the contemporary Muslim scholar maintains that 'there were fifteen to twenty literate people in Mecca, while in Medina the number of those who knew the art was even smaller.'<sup>2</sup> But according to Balādhurī, who seems to be the primary source of Ḥamīdullah's report, seventeen is the total number of literates among the Quraysh tribe only whom he mentions by name.<sup>3</sup> The literates of Medina are also mentioned by name and number. Dr. Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, a modern Indian scholar, believes that the number of the Arabs of Medina

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, I, i, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ṣahīfa, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Futūḥ, 457. The names of literates given by Balādhurī are as follows:

1. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.
2. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb.
3. 'Uthmān b. 'Affān.
4. Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ.
5. Ṭalḥa (b. 'Ubayd Allāh).
6. Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān.
7. Abū Ḥudhayfa b. 'Utba b. Rabī'a.
8. Ḥaṣīb b. 'Amr al-'Āmirī.
9. Abū Salama b. 'Abd al-Asad al-Makhzūmī.
10. Abnā b. Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣī b. Umayya.
11. Khālīd b. Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣī b. Umayya.
12. 'Abd Allāh b. Sa'd b. Abī Sarḥ al-'Āmirī.
13. Ḥuwayṭib b. 'Abd al-'Uzzā al-'Āmirī.
14. Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb b. Umayya.
15. Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān.
16. Juhaym b. aṣ-Ṣalt b. Makhrama.
17. Al-'Alā' b. al-Ḥaḍramī.

who could write was less than a dozen.<sup>1</sup> He seems to have reached this conclusion on the basis of Ibn Sa'd's report which gives names of nine such persons.<sup>2</sup>

But looking at the literary and cultural history of pre-Islamic Arabia, we expect more literates than hitherto described. In addition to poetry, the Ayyām (narrative of the battles) and genealogies, and other religious and profane literature of the period point to fairly advanced stage of literacy in pre-Islamic Arabia. We enumerate below some of the written records of this period to show the literary achievements of Bedouin Arabs.

### 3. Written records of pre-Islamic Arabia:

- (i) Ṣaḥīfa, Majalla and Rawāsīm:- In pre-Islamic Arabia, the wise sayings, proverbs, certain laws, and interesting information used to be recorded in black and white. The receptacles of such information were known as ṣaḥīfa (pl. ṣuḥuf), majalla (pl. majāll) and rawāsīm (pl. rawāsīm). Nābigha Dhubyānī uses the word majalla to indicate the Gospel,<sup>3</sup> while the Qur'ān refers to the 'Rolls of Abraham and Moses' as Suḥuf Ibrāhīm wa Mūsā.<sup>4</sup> This shows that both the 'Gospel'

<sup>1</sup> Ḥadīth lit., 41.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, III, ii, 23, 59, 79, 91, 100, 136, 142, 148. The names given are as follows: Abū 'Abs b. Jabr, Ubayy b. Ka'b, 'Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa, Aws b. Khawālīy, Mundhir b. 'Amr, Usayd b. Ḥudayr, Ḥudayr, Sa'd b. 'Ubāda and Rāfi' b. Mālik.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, i, 48.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 87:19

and the 'Rolls of Abraham and Moses' were preserved in written form.

It was customary in those days to record the wise sayings and proverbs in ṣaḥīfa or majalla. In fact, the post Islamic practice of recording Prophet's sayings in ṣuḥuf or majāll<sup>1</sup> is the continuation of old bedouin method of preserving precious words of wisdom.

The wise sayings normally called ḥikma were so popular during the Prophet's time that they used to be compared with the teachings of Muḥammad. The following story provides an example. It is reported that Muḥammad invited Suwayd b. Ṣāmit to embrace Islam. The latter declined his invitation saying, 'you might be having the same thing as I myself possess'. On enquiry as to what did he possess, Suwayd told that he was in possession of Majallat Luqmān i.e. a manuscript containing wise sayings of Luqmān. The story further tells that the Prophet then asked him to read out the majalla which the latter did. Thereupon the Prophet said that he had something more precious and valuable, namely the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

It appears from the story that the wise sayings of Luqmān were preserved in a book form entitled majallat Luqmān. This book was

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<sup>1</sup> The ṣaḥīfa of the companions are well known. As regards majalla (pl. majāll), containing sayings of the Prophet, we find a report in which it is said that Anas b. Mālik (d. 91/93 A.H.) wrote down the traditions of the Prophet and gave his majāll (the booklets in loose sheets or rolls) to his pupils for copying and memorisation. (cf. Nihāya (Ath), i, 201.; iv. 85.; Taqyīd, 95.)

<sup>2</sup> Annales, i. 1208.; Sīra, 283-285.

perhaps in circulation throughout the first century, for the well-known scholar Wahb. b. Munabbih (d. 110/116 A.H.) is reported to have read numerous chapters or part of it.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from majallat Luqmān, we find references of other ṣaḥīfas and majallas which contained the wise sayings (ḥikma) of unidentified persons. Bashīr b. Ka'b, for instance, possessed a ṣaḥīfa containing wise sayings. It is reported that once when 'Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn (d. 52 A.H.) related a saying of the Prophet, Bashīr b. Ka'b compared it with the ḥikma contained in his ṣaḥīfa, whereupon 'Imrān reproached him saying, 'whereas I relate to you on the authority of the Prophet, you relate to me from your ṣaḥīfa.<sup>2</sup>

The practice of recording ḥikma in ṣaḥīfa continued quite late, for we hear Mu'āwiya asking his courtier Ḥabīb b. Maslama al-Fihri: 'write this in your book, for it is ḥikma'.<sup>3</sup>

As regards ṣaḥīfa of pre-Islamic Arabia, the Qur'ān provides the best testimony by referring to ṣuḥuf Ibrāhīm wa Mūsā<sup>4</sup> (the rolls of Abraham and Moses). Ibn Munajjim, writing in 131 A.H., says that this book existed among the Jews of Arabia.<sup>5</sup> Its reference in the Qur'ān suggests that the book was well known to Arabs.

Apart from majalla and ṣaḥīfa, we find mention of books known

<sup>1</sup> Ma'ārif, 27.

<sup>2</sup> S. B, iv, 139. (Adab).

<sup>3</sup> 'Iqd, iv, 110.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 87:19.

<sup>5</sup> 'Origin of writing...', JASB, (1856), p. 378.

as rawāsīm (pl. rawāsīm). These books contained certain customary laws of Arabian society.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that ṣahīfa and majalla did not necessarily imply a book-size manuscript. They were rather loosely used to indicate a note book, memorandum or even a book. As regards majalla, the Prophet is reported to have said, "with the Arabs every kitāb (written text) is a majalla".<sup>2</sup>

(ii) Religious texts:

(a) Torah and Bible:- Sources point to the existence of certain religious texts of pre-Islamic Arabia.<sup>3</sup>

The most important document of this nature is the Arabic version of Old and New Testaments.

Although we are not sure whether complete Bible in Arabic was available to the Arabs of seventh and eighth century A.D.<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Lisān, xii, 241. ; Jones, Williams, "On the Arabs", Asiatic Researches, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Nihāya (Ath), i, 201.

<sup>3</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 69-70, 88. ; Fajr, 199.

<sup>4</sup> The question whether there was any translation of the Bible in the early days of Islam is still unsettled. While Arthur Vööbus assumes a pre-Islamic Arabic translation of Gospel, Graf, on the other hand, doubts the existence of such a translation until so late as the ninth century A.D. [cf. Papyri, i, p. 50, referring Arthur Vööbus, Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac ("Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum orientaliū: Subsidia" III [Louvain, 1951]) pp. 6-9, 156-163; and Georg Graf, Geschichte der Christlichen arabischen Literatur I (Città del Vaticano, 1944, pp. 27-52.)] Similarly, while some scholars believe that the "first version of Christian Scripture in Arabic dates from the eighth century..." (cf. Kilgour, The Gospel in many years, pp. 10-11), M.J. de Goeje, agreeing with Nöldeke remarks, "No Arabic version of the Bible, or parts of the Bible, existed either in the time of the Prophet or at the time of the fathers of the Mohammedan church." (cf. Semitic Studies, ed. G.A. Kohut, Berlin, 1897, p. 185).

Referring to the findings of Gibson and Götze on this subject, Abbott says, "The results of the researches of Gibson and Götze bring the date of beginning of the development of Christian Arabic literature to about 700 A.D. at the latest." (cf. Papyri, i, 48.) But since these results have been reached on meagre paleographic evidence, they cannot, therefore, be considered as final.



yet we are told of the existence of some early Christian and Jewish religious documents in pre-Islamic Arabia. The story of Caliph 'Umar's possession of 'Book of Daniel' for which he was rebuked by the Prophet,<sup>1</sup> shows that some such material was in circulation before the advent of Islam.

That this religious literature was extant in writing can be inferred from the following report. Of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ, it is said that he possessed a number of books of the 'People of the Book' which he used to study with great interest.<sup>2</sup> These 'number of books' seem to be stray sheets containing portions of the Bible. It is difficult to say whether these 'books' were in Arabic or in Syriac, but the possibility of its being in Arabic is very great in view of the presence of Arabic speaking Christian missionaries in the region.

We find references of people who in early Islam used to read and sometimes quote passages from both Torah and Gospel<sup>3</sup> - a fact which shows that these scriptures were written down, though in portions. To take few examples, Mālik b. Dīnār (d. 130 A.H.) not only read the Torah but frequently quoted the Bible in Arabic,<sup>4</sup> Warāqa b. Nawfal was not only 'reader of books',<sup>5</sup> but had copied part of the Bible,<sup>6</sup> and Ibn Ishāq quotes several proverbs which apparently come from the Bible.<sup>7</sup>

(b) Book of Daniel:- Among the religious texts of this period

<sup>1</sup> SD, i, 115-116.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 11. ; VII, ii, 189.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VII, i, 161. ; Hilya, ii, 45.

<sup>4</sup> Hilya, ii, 358-359.

<sup>5</sup> Sīra, i, 121, 143, 149, 153, 205.

<sup>6</sup> SH, i, 32.

<sup>7</sup> Sīra, i, 149-150.



was the 'Book of Daniel' which contained prophesies and apocryphal history. It was very popular during the Prophet's lifetime.

Probably it was this book which 'Umar had copied and incurred the Prophet's wrath. The story goes that 'Umar copied a book of the 'believers in the Scriptures', bound it in red leather and brought it to the Prophet. Looking at this book in 'Umar's hand, the Prophet got angry and admonished the former for copying a scripture other than the Qur'an.<sup>1</sup>

Although the story gives no indication that the book copied by 'Umar was the 'Book of Daniel', yet the occasion on which the story was related suggests so. It was narrated by 'Umar himself when a similar situation arose during his caliphate. It so happened that a man from the tribe of 'Abd al-Qays made a copy of the 'Book of Daniel'. When 'Umar came to know of it, he called the man, asked him to destroy the book, and threatened him with severe punishment if he or anyone else read it. Thereafter he narrated his own story referred to above.<sup>2</sup> This was done, perhaps, to show that the Prophet disapproved of such an act and also perhaps to impress upon the man that he ('Umar) was acting in accordance with the sunna of the Prophet. In any case, it is clear from the story that the 'Book of Daniel' was found in written form in early Islamic period, if not in pre-Islamic era.

Another reference to this book is found in a report given by 'Amr b. Maymūn (d. 74 A.H.). He relates: "I was sitting in the company of several persons at Kufa when a man came with a book. The people present asked:

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<sup>1</sup> SD, i, 115-116.; Tacyīd, 52.

<sup>2</sup> Tacyīd, 51-52.; Muqaddima, 436.; 'Origin of writing...', JASB (1856), p. 312.

'what book is this?'. He replied, " 'The Book of Daniel'." <sup>1</sup>

Above reports where clear reference to the 'book' is found indicate that the 'Book of Daniel' in all probability was extant at the time of Muḥammad, for if it could survive during the rigid rule of 'Umar and thereafter, it could have been easily in existence during the Prophet's time. And the age preceding the Prophet was more favourable to such a literature than the one following him.

It is to be borne in mind that the 'Book of Daniel' dealing with Oneirocritics is different from the book which we have been discussing so far. This book, according to Sprenger's researches, did not exist at the time of Muḥammad. <sup>2</sup>

(c) Book of Enoch:- Another religious text extant in pre-Islamic Arabia was the 'Book of Enoch'. Sprenger is of the opinion that the translation of this book into Arabic was made before the time of the Prophet. <sup>3</sup>

(iii) Writings of Ḥanīfs and Sabians:

It has all along been a mystery as to who the ḥanīfs were. One view is that it was a sect of monotheists in Arabia who were neither Jews nor Christians. <sup>4</sup> But according to Qur'ānic version, says Prof. Watt, "the ḥanīfs were the followers of the ideal original

<sup>1</sup> 'Origin of writing...', JASB, (1856), p. 312. ; Tacyīd, 56-57

<sup>2</sup> 'Origin of writing...', JASB, (1856), p. 376.

<sup>3</sup> 'Origin of writing...' JASB, (1856), p. 376.

<sup>4</sup> Mecca, 162. ; SE; iii, 16 (Manāqib)20, (Manāqib al-Anṣār).

of Arab religion; they were no sect or party of historical people."<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of whether they were Christians, Jews or Monotheists, this much is certain, that it was a 'party of men' with certain beliefs. It is about this 'party of men' (whether we call them ḥanīf or attribute some other name to them) that it is reported that they possessed some sort of Hebrew, Syriac or Arabic manuscripts.<sup>2</sup> Dhahabī reports that they used to travel in search of religious information from Jews, Christians and other communities.<sup>3</sup> This report shows that religious propaganda was on among Christians and Jews of pre-Islamic Arabia. It seems that ḥanīfs were keenly interested in religious knowledge and had possessed some written records.

Sabians, like ḥanīfs, are also reported to have possessed some books about their beliefs. They were a small community 'professing a monotheism based mainly on Greek philosophy'.<sup>4</sup> The chances of their possessing some manuscripts are rather great in view of the definition of the word Ṣābī itself. This term, by which they are known, literally means 'one who reads or writes books'.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4. Other proofs of writing in pre-Islamic Arabia:

- (i) Midrās:- Midrās or midrāsh was a place where Jewish religion and the art of writing was taught.<sup>6</sup> The teaching of language also formed a subject of curriculum in some of these midrās. Abū Ḥāritha, known for his 'exceptional religious knowledge among Roman Emperors',<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mecca, 162, citing R. Bell, 'Who were the Ḥanīfs?', Moslem world XX (1930), 124.

<sup>2</sup> Nubalā', i, 86

<sup>3</sup> Nubalā', i, 86

<sup>4</sup> Mecca, 28.

<sup>5</sup> Papyri, ii, 6, referring Hamadānī's al-Iklīl, p. 17

<sup>6</sup> Fath, vi, 171.

<sup>7</sup> Sīra, 401.

had read Greek books, while Zayd b. Thābit learnt Hebrew language in these midrās.<sup>1</sup> It is said that the Prophet, Abū Bakr and 'Umar, all three paid a visit to one of the Jewish midrās in Medina.<sup>2</sup>

Looking at the function the midrās performed, we can justly infer that some written literature must have been produced from this religious-cum-educational institution. It also shows a literary atmosphere of pre-Islamic Arabia.

That writing was employed at the advent of Islam can be inferred from information provided by historical sources. The mention of the Prophet's scribes and other women writers of early Islamic period provide ample evidence of popularity of writing on the eve of Islam. The term 'kāmil', applied to those who knew, inter alia, the art of writing provides additional evidence of literacy in those days.

- (ii) Muhammad's scribes:- Without entering into the controversy whether Muhammad was literate or not,<sup>3</sup> we turn to his literate companions who were busy writing the passages of the Qur'ān. Some of these scribes

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 258.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 383, 388, 394. ; SB, ii, 294 (Jizya).

<sup>3</sup> The Qur'ān testifies the illiteracy of Muhammad (cf. Qur'ān, 29:47). Although it was quite possible for Muhammad to learn to read and write, yet he remained illiterate throughout his life. The reason why he made this decision was to prove the Divine origin of the Qur'ān. (cf. 'Iqd', iv, 245. ; 'Ulūm', 15-16). For opposite view about Muhammad's literacy, see, Med. Islam, 98, n. ; Papyri, ii, 257, n. ; Jewish Foundation, 31-41, 93-95.

were proficient in the art of writing from pre-Islamic times, others learnt it later.

We find a long list of these secretaries - both permanent and temporary - in Al-Kattānī's at-Tarātīb al-Idāriyya,<sup>1</sup> where forty-two names are mentioned. Dr. Ḥamīdullah's al-Wathā'iq as-Siyāsīyya<sup>2</sup> provides us with some more names bringing the total to about fifty. This long list of Muḥammad's scribes gives us the impression that literacy in general and writing in particular was not totally unknown to the Arabs. The fact that some scribes had learnt the art of writing only after Islam and became so proficient as to become official secretaries reflect the prevailing literary atmosphere of Arabia without which such an achievement of these scribes would have been well-nigh impossible.

(iii) Women writers:- If we look at the list of those who knew how to read and write, we come across the names of several women literates of this period. The well known among them were Ḥafṣa, Umm Kulthūm, Shifā' bint 'Abd Allāh (the tutor of Ḥafṣa), 'Ā'isha bint Sa'd, Umm Salmā, Fāṭima bint al-Khaṭṭāb, Khadīja, and Karīma bint al-Miqdād.<sup>3</sup>

The majority of these women writers had learnt the art of writing before Islam. It shows that writing in this period was so popular that even women, the most ignoble and underprivileged class

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<sup>1</sup> Tarātīb, i, 115.; Also see 'Ulūm, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Wathā'iq, passim.

<sup>3</sup> Futūh, 458.

of pagan society, could learn it. Balādhurī has cited an interesting story which shows that writing was not uncommon among women of this age. He reports that a married woman named Shumayla wrote a love message on sand. The husband happened to see it and divorced his wife. The lady consequently got married to her lover.<sup>1</sup>

The above story, if genuine, clearly reflects the prevalent practice of writing among the pre-Islamic Arabs.

- (iv) Teaching of the art of writing:- It appears that the kitāba (the art of writing) was seriously learnt by interested few in the pre-Islamic Arabia. We find occasional references to the teachers and pupils of this art. To take for instance, 'Amr b. Zurāra,<sup>2</sup> also known as al-kātib (scribe), and Jufayna<sup>3</sup> are mentioned among the teachers of the art of writing. Similarly, it is reported that 'Adī b. Zayd al-'Ibādī was sent to a school (Kuttāb) to learn this art.<sup>4</sup>

Incidentally, the second report also points to the existence of proper schools in pre-Islamic Arabia. That schools existed in that period is also evident from the fact that we find several references of teachers (mu'allimūn) in early sources.<sup>5</sup>

- (v) Kāmil:- The term Kāmil, found in early and pre-Islamic literature, is indicative enough to show that writing was viewed with great honour. In those days, a person expert in marksmanship, swimming, and writing was given the honorific title of 'perfect man' or Kāmil.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 6, n. , citing Ashrāf, i, 137.

<sup>2</sup> Masādir, 50.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, III, i, 258.

<sup>4</sup> Agh, ii, 101.

<sup>5</sup> Muhabbar, 475.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, III, ii, 91, 136, 142, 148. ; Futūh, 459. ; Agh, iii, 25., where it is mentioned that Kāmil also included the qualities of poetry and bravery.

Among these kumalā' (pl. of Kāmil) were: Sa'd b. 'Ubāda,<sup>1</sup> Usayd b. Ḥudayr<sup>2</sup>, 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy<sup>3</sup>, Aws b. Khawlī<sup>4</sup>, Suwayd b. aṣ-Ṣāmit<sup>5</sup>, Ḥudayr al-Katā'ib<sup>6</sup>, and Rāfi' b. Mālik<sup>7</sup>.

Although history has not preserved the records of writings of these men, the degree of probability of their having left some written record is quite high. The appellation of the term 'kāmil' against their names suggests such an inference.

(vi) Pacts and tribal agreements:-

Among the pre-Islamic written records may also be mentioned the tribal pacts and agreements, some of which have been preserved in early sources. The document boycotting the Prophet and his family<sup>8</sup>, known as Ṣaḥīfa and Kitāb, was perhaps the last of a series of such written pacts. The text of a tribal agreement between the Qaḥṭān and the Rabī'a has been preserved by Dīnwarī<sup>9</sup>. In addition to this, we find reference of a pact between Khuzā'a and 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib<sup>10</sup>. This written document is said to have been hanged in the building of Ka'ba and was later found in the family of Khuzā'a. It is reported that it was brought to the Prophet on the occasion of Ḥudaybiya when Ubayy b. Ka'b read it out to the Prophet<sup>11</sup>.

The existence of these written tribal agreements<sup>12</sup> clearly indicates

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, III, ii, 142. ; Futūḥ, 459.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, ii, 136. ; Futūḥ, 459.

<sup>3</sup> Futūḥ, 459.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, III, ii, 91. ; Futūḥ, 459.

<sup>5</sup> Futūḥ, 459. ; Agh, iii, 25. ; Sīra, 284.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, III, ii, 136. ; Futūḥ, 460.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, III, ii, 148. ; Futūḥ, 459.

<sup>8</sup> Tab, I, i, 139-140. ; Annales, i, 1189. ; Sīra, 230.

<sup>9</sup> Tiwāl, 353-354.

<sup>10</sup> Maṣādir, 66.

<sup>11</sup> Maṣādir, 66. ; Wathā'iq, no. 171.

<sup>12</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 69-70.



that writing was not unknown among the bedouin Arabs of pre-Islamic era.

(vii) Inscriptions:- Another important source of information regarding the Arabic writing in pre-Islamic Arabia are the early inscriptions, some of which have been discovered in recent past. Asad, in his Masādir ash-Shi'r al-Jāhili, refers to eight such inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> While Rosenthal considers the inscription on the tomb of Imru 'l Qays, dated 328 A.D., as 'the oldest preserved Arabic inscription',<sup>2</sup> Asad points to a much earlier inscription of the beginning of the third century A.D. He refers to an inscription, dated 210 A.D., found in the valley of al-Maktab, in the Ṭūr Ṣīna peninsula<sup>3</sup>. This he considers the earliest known inscription.

Azraqī refers to several inscriptions on the stones of the building of Ka'ba, some of which were discovered at the time of the rebuilding of the Shrine.<sup>4</sup> He also mentions a number of inscriptions inscribed on alwāh and hajar, found on hillocks and other places.<sup>5</sup>

It should be emphasised that Azraqī is the most reliable historian with regard to Meccan inscriptions. Considering his reports accurate and genuine, Rosenthal remarks, "It is comforting to be able to refer to a few cases of an accurate and historical use of inscriptions by Muslim historians.... A valuable example in this direction was set by the early historian of Mecca, al-Azraqī. He quoted Meccan building inscriptions which no doubt were

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<sup>1</sup> Masādir, 25-31.

<sup>2</sup> Historiography, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Masādir, 25-26.

<sup>4</sup> Akhbār, i, 37, 111.; ii, 227.; Also see Nihāya, i, 312.

<sup>5</sup> Akhbār, i, 149-160, 270.; ii, 233.

genuine and correctly reproduced."<sup>1</sup>

The above reports regarding Meccan inscriptions clearly show the prevalence of Arabic writing in pre-Islamic Arabia.

(viii) Poetry, war-like deeds and tribal genealogies:-

Lastly, we come to the richest heritage of Bedouin Arabs - their poetry, which was mainly oral and was formally recorded only in late Umayyad and early Abbasid period.

Most of the scholars are sceptical about its pure oral transmission from pre-Islamic period till Umayyad and Abbasid times. They are partly justified in doing so, for very little, rather insignificant, written record of pre-Islamic poetry could survive to this day. But to declare the whole bedouin poetry as product of post-Islamic period simply because they were orally transmitted is also unjustifiable, in view of the fact that such a large scale fabrication and its attribution to pre-Islamic period is unimaginable. Moreover, the powerful retentive memory of Arabs is also a reality which should not be completely overlooked. As a matter of fact memory was one of the two reliable sources of preserving knowledge.

As regards the writing down of poetry in this period, it is said that certain tribes used to record the poems of their tribal poets.<sup>2</sup> It is also well known that some pagan poetry were inscribed in golden letters and used to be hanged on the doors of the Ka'ba as the masterpiece of the year.<sup>3</sup> Thus, we are told that at least

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<sup>1</sup> Historiography, 112.

<sup>2</sup> Masādir, 107-133.

<sup>3</sup> Mufad, 10.; Iqd., vi, 119.

few, if not all, poetical works of Jāhiliyya period were written down. Nāṣir al-Asad, in his Masādir ash-Shi'r al-Jāhili, has collected some twenty references from different poems for recording the poetry in pre-Islamic Arabia.<sup>1</sup> Krenkow also believes that some records were preserved by the pagan poets.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from poetry, the tribal genealogies<sup>3</sup>, and tribes' war-like deeds (ayyām al-'Arab) also formed part of the written material of Bedouin Arabs.<sup>4</sup>

(ix) Personal letters:-

Among the written records of pre-Islamic Arabia were also the personal letters freely exchanged among the literate bedouins.<sup>5</sup> To take for instance, Ḥaṇẓala b. Abī Sufyān wrote to his father in Yemen that Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh was inviting people to Allāh.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Qusayy b. Kilāb wrote to his brother Rizāḥ asking for his help.<sup>7</sup> Then we find a reference of the letters exchanged between Samaw'al and Ḥārith b. Abī Shamr al-Ghassānī.<sup>8</sup>

(x) Occasional recordings:-

Mention may also be made of occasional recordings of proverbs<sup>9</sup>, historical events<sup>10</sup>, promissory notes<sup>11</sup>, and letters of amnesty<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Masādir, 122-133.

<sup>2</sup> Krenkow, "The use of writing for the Preservation of Ancient Arabic Poetry", A volume of Oriental Studies to E.G. Browne, Edited by J.W. Arnold, pp. 261-268.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, IV, i, 32-33.

<sup>4</sup> 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Subh, vi, 468.

<sup>6</sup> Agh, vi, 250.

<sup>7</sup> Sīra, 75.

<sup>8</sup> Agh, ix, 99.

<sup>9</sup> Ta'wīl, 137 n.

<sup>10</sup> Subh, vi, 468.; Historical Sources, 144, referring to the ancient custom of inscribing public events on monuments.

<sup>11</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 181.; Masādir, 70.

<sup>12</sup> Agh, xi, 120.

in pre-Islamic Arabia. These records should be expected more in the commercial town of Mecca than in far off areas where transaction was perhaps oral.

The above discussion gives some idea of the condition of literacy in pre-Islamic Arabia. In the light of these information it looks incredible that there were only seventeen literates in Mecca at the advent of Islam.<sup>1</sup> In fact it is an underestimate of the literary achievement of the pre-Islamic people. The condition of literacy was not as bad as claimed by early historians. The continuous discoveries of old papyri, the inscriptions and modern researches in this early period, has falsified the claim of total ignorance of Arabia before Islam.<sup>2</sup> Now, we are not justified in denying their religious, cultural and literary achievement, especially in presence of ample proof of Christian and Jewish influence on them. A ḥadīth tells us that Jews used to read the passages of Torah and translated them into Arabic for Arabic speaking Bedouins.<sup>3</sup> Umayya b. Abī's-Salt<sup>4</sup> and Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith,<sup>5</sup> we are told, possessed Biblical knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

As regards social life of pre-Islamic Arabs, we are informed that

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<sup>1</sup> Futūḥ, 457. ; Iqd, iv, 242-243.

<sup>2</sup> Inscriptions of the time of Caliph Mu'āwīya and papyrus of the time of Caliph 'Umar have been discovered so far. (cf. George C. Miles, "Early Islamic Inscriptions near Ṭā'if in the Hijaz", Journal of the Near Eastern Studies, October, 1948, p. 240; Adolf Grohmann, From the world of Arabic Papyri, Cairo, 1952, p. 82 ; and Tadrīb, 152.)

<sup>3</sup> SB, iii, 98 (Tafsīr al-Qur'ān). ; iv, 441 (I'tisām), 495 (Tawḥīd).

<sup>4</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 320.

<sup>5</sup> Naḍr used to write in pre-Islamic times. (cf. sīra, 235)

<sup>6</sup> Sīra, 191-192, 235-236, 458.

they possessed certain laws which they used to follow. Although each tribe had its own laws<sup>1</sup>, yet they attached importance to the spirit of law. The reference of rawāsīm, mentioned above, suggests the presence of even codified tribal law.

That Arabs were not without prose literature in pre-Islamic times<sup>2</sup> is evident from Hishām b. Muḥammad b. Sā'ib Kalbī's claim to have obtained material for his book 'Kitāb al-Ansāb' from the 'books found in Ḥīra'.<sup>3</sup> This statement of Hishām rightly led Rashīd Riḍa to believe that the term ummiyya (illiteracy) cannot be applied to all Arabs,<sup>4</sup> as is suggested by few.<sup>5</sup>

In fact the references of numerous writing materials and receptacles of written records in the Qur'ān and other early and pre-Islamic literature clearly suggests that writing was fairly known in the pre-Islamic times. In addition to the receptacles like kitāb, ṣahīfa, majalla, etc.,<sup>6</sup> we find references of pen, papyrus, ink, inkpots, tablets, register, seals and a score of other items relating to written records.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the words of Labīd, "Wa likulli dawmin sunnatun wa imāmuḥā (every tribe has its own code of laws and a leader)". (cf. Seven Poems, 123).

<sup>2</sup> Est, ii, 204-205/190-191. ; "Origin of writing...", JASB, 1856, pp. 375-378

<sup>3</sup> Manār, X, 746.

<sup>4</sup> Manār, X, 746.

<sup>5</sup> Med. Islam, 98, n. ; 'Ulūm, 15-16.

<sup>6</sup> For various early usages of these and other similar terms, see infra, chapter V, pp. 268-307.

<sup>7</sup> Maṣādir, 59-103.

152

A long list of these writing materials provide us with sufficient proof to our hypothesis that writing was in vogue among the bedouins of pre-Islamic Arabia.

The well known ḥadīth term, 'matn' also suggests the use of writing in pre-Islamic Arabia. This post-Islamic term for the text (as against the isnād) of ḥadīth is a pre-Islamic word.<sup>1</sup> In the Jāhiliyya period it signified a 'written text'.<sup>2</sup> Labīd uses it in this sense when, lamenting on the ruins of his beloved, he says, "The floods have cleared away (the dust) from the ruins (which shine as clearly) as if they were books (zubbūr), the texts of which (mutūnahā) the pens (awlāmuhā) have renewed."<sup>3</sup>

The use of mutūn, the plural of matn (text), along with the awlām (pens) and zubbūr (books) in these lines strongly suggest the existence of writing in pre-Islamic Arabia.

Referring to the existence of written material of early and pre-Islamic era, Juynboll reports: "[Fuāt Sezgin] presents a revision of Goldziher's chronology of the registration; he contends that writing was much more commonly practised in the earliest days than Goldziher had given to understand."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mst, ii, 6-7/20.

<sup>2</sup> It appears that the post-Islamic technical meaning of the term 'matn' (the text of a ḥadīth) has been borrowed from this pre-Islamic sense.

<sup>3</sup> Seven Poems, 94.

<sup>4</sup> Authenticity, 3, referring Fuāt Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, vol. I, pp. 53-83.

## 5. Position of writing after Islam:

We have seen that writing was not unknown in Arabia when Muḥammad appeared on the scene. Was it not natural in these circumstances that new converts wished to record the sayings of their religious leader in writing, more so when the latter had encouraged them to do so? The answer to this is positively in affirmative. The companions paid full attention to the Prophet's teachings and tried not only to learn but to spread them among their co-religionists. The dissemination of his teachings was part of the Prophet's mission which the companions successfully accomplished. But along with this task, the companions also made arrangements to preserve these teachings both orally and in writing. So far as Arabs' power of memorisation was concerned, they were unrivalled in this art and used to learn thousands of verses by hearing only once; as regards practice of writing, they were wont to record wise sayings of Luqmān and others, and used to write the poetry of their tribal poets, their genealogies and war-like deeds. Both methods were, therefore, available to them for preservation of the Prophet's teachings.

Despite this fact, it is generally believed that traditions were preserved solely in memory and only after centuries could they be transferred into books.<sup>1</sup> This supposition is untenable on the ground that if wise sayings of Luqmān and Aktham could be recorded in writing, the sayings of Muḥammad were more likely to be recorded in black and white. The statement of Robson, a contemporary ḥadīth scholar, is worth mentioning here. Agreeing with Sprenger, he says, "Sprenger wisely remarks that, while he is prepared to believe that no real books were produced before A.H. 120, he cannot believe that traditionists before

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Adwā', 207. ; Qūt, i, 159. ; Muḥaddithūn, 127. ; Fajr, 221.; Taḥdīth, 45-46.; Fath (Intr), i, 17. ; Tdh, i, 151. ; Fath, i, 218.; Khitāt, ii, 333. ; Zunūn, i, 637.; Manār, x, 768.; Literary History, 144.; Tacyīd (intr.), 7.; As-summa (Sib.), 40.



this trusted wholly to their memory and had not at least written notes."<sup>1</sup> Guillaume's remark on the subject is also interesting, who says, "the extraordinary importance attached to every utterance of his (the Prophet) would naturally lead his followers who were able to write to record his words in order to repeat them to those who clamoured to know what he had said; and there is nothing at all in any demonstrably early writing to suggest that such a practice would be distasteful to Muhammad."<sup>2</sup>

The recent discoveries of documents of the Prophet's time disprove the theory of late recording of ḥadīth. It can now be established that ḥadīth used to be written during his lifetime. In fact, the question of written transmission of ḥadīth is closely linked with the historical development of the practice of writing itself.

We have seen that the practice of writing had begun long before the advent of Islam. It found great patronage under Islam and the art progressed by leaps and bounds during the Prophet's time and thereafter. The Prophet, motivated by the first revelation regarding reading and writing,<sup>3</sup> framed a sound educational policy and implemented it with great enthusiasm. In pursuance of this policy he opened schools, appointed teachers, employed scribes to write down revelations,<sup>4</sup> and sent teachers to various provinces of Islamic Empire.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robson, "Tradition, the second foundation of Islam", Muslim world, XLI:i (January, 1951), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Traditions, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 96: 1-5. (Icra' = read; al-qalam = pen).

<sup>4</sup> The number of scribes range between 40 and 50 (cf. Tarātib, i, 115).

<sup>5</sup> Muṣ'ab b. 'Umayr, known as muqri' (reader) was sent to instruct the Medinese even in pre-migration period (cf. Sīra, i, 289, 290.; Tab, III, i, 83.).

In the beginning, there were no separate school buildings; the private houses and mosques served this purpose. The houses of Arqam<sup>1</sup> and Maḥrama b. Nawfal<sup>2</sup> are cited as some of those dwellings where education was imparted. The former was the centre of religious education in Mecca, while the latter, popularly known as Dār al-Qurā' (house of readers)<sup>3</sup> was a kind of residential school in Medina.

Apart from Dār al-Qurā', there were nine<sup>4</sup> mosques in Medina which might have been used as schools. As regards proper schools, they are not mentioned in the sources except the one opened in 2 A.H.<sup>5</sup> We, however, find references of teachers appointed by the Prophet. The prominent among them were: 'Ubāda b. aṣ-Ṣāmit<sup>6</sup>, 'Abd Allāh b. Sa'īd b. al-'Aṣ<sup>7</sup>, Sa'd b. ar-Rabī' al-Khazrajī<sup>8</sup>, Bashīr b. Sa'd b. Tha'laba<sup>9</sup>, Abān b. Sa'īd b. al-'Aṣ<sup>10</sup>, Muṣ'ab b. 'Umayr<sup>11</sup> and Ibn Umm Maktūm.<sup>12</sup> Among the teachers sent to various cities were the band of seventy (var. forty)<sup>13</sup> who were killed at Bi'r Ma'ūna while on their way to the

<sup>1</sup> Annales, i, 2330.; Akhbār, ii, 210.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, IV, i, 150.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, IV, i, 150.

<sup>4</sup> Ashrāf, i, 273.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, IV, i, 150.

<sup>6</sup> Tarātīb, i, 48.

<sup>7</sup> Uṣd, iii, 175. He was known in pre-Islamic times as kātib (scribe).

<sup>8</sup> Tab, III, ii, 77.

<sup>9</sup> Tab, III, ii, 83.

<sup>10</sup> Futūḥ, 457.; Futūḥ (Goeje), 472.

<sup>11</sup> Sīra, 289-290; Tab, I, i, 158.; III, i, 83.

<sup>12</sup> Tab, I, i, 158.

<sup>13</sup> Sīra, 648.

people of Najd.<sup>1</sup> Others were sent to Najrān<sup>2</sup> and to Yemen<sup>3</sup>. The famous Mu'adh b. Jabal had been appointed as inspector of schools and was sent to Yemen where he toured from district to district.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Prophet himself remained illiterate,<sup>5</sup> he encouraged others to learn not only Arabic but also other languages. For example he had asked Zayd b. Thābit to learn Hebrew and Syriac.<sup>6</sup> A number of traditions are ascribed to the Prophet which show his favourable attitude towards reading and writing.<sup>7</sup> In a ḥadīth, he is reported to have directed the children to acquire learning from their neighbours.<sup>8</sup> In another version, he asked them to take their lessons at the mosques in their streets.<sup>9</sup> According to another ḥadīth, unpaid teaching is the duty of every learned man and withholding knowledge is a punishable sin.<sup>10</sup> About 'writing' as such, he says, "the teaching of writing is a duty of father towards his son."<sup>11</sup> He has given several advices with regard to writing, such as drying written texts after writing,<sup>12</sup> revision after completion,<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, II, i, 36, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, III, i, 299.

<sup>3</sup> Kunā, i, 19.

<sup>4</sup> Annales, i, 1852-1853, 1981.; Sīra, 886-887, 956-957.; Hilya, i, 240-241.

<sup>5</sup> Some Muslim scholars like Abū'l-walīd (d. 474 A.H.) and Dhahabī (d. 748 A.H.) believe that Muḥammad could read or write a word or two. But they had been severely criticised by other fellow muslims. (cf. Tdh, ii, 277.).

<sup>6</sup> Tab, II, ii, 115.; Annales, i, 1460.

<sup>7</sup> Jāmi', chapter on 'ilm, and other ḥadīth collections under the title 'ilm; Bayān, i, 7-55.

<sup>8</sup> Sahīfa, 11.; Tarātīb, i, 41-42.

<sup>9</sup> Sahīfa, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Bayān, i, 3-5.

<sup>11</sup> Tarātīb, ii, 239-240.

<sup>12</sup> Imlā', 174.; Majma', ii, 47.

<sup>13</sup> Adab, 165.

and dotting letters.<sup>1</sup> In one of his instructions, he asks Zayd b. Thābit to put his pen on his ear during short interval in the course of dictation.<sup>2</sup> He is reported to have said to Mu'āwiya, "O Mu'āwiya, use cotton (for stirring up the ink) in your inkstand and nib your point obliquely."<sup>3</sup>

Apart from ~~these~~ indirect instructions<sup>4</sup> which he gave in connection with writing, he took some practical steps to acquaint his community with the art of writing and to popularise the same. He had asked Shifā' bint 'Abd Allāh, a pre-Islamic woman scribe, to teach the art of writing to his wife Ḥafṣa<sup>5</sup>. The story of the prisoners of Badr whose ransom was fixed as teaching the art of writing to ten children each, is quite well known.<sup>6</sup> The Prophet's acceptance of this service as their ransom shows how much importance he used to give to the art of writing. Again, he had persuaded Zayd b. Thābit to learn to write Hebrew and Syriac<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Adab, 57. It is generally believed that the introduction of diacritical marks of Arabic alphabets did not take place until the second half of the first century. But Suyūṭī believes that dots were employed even during the Prophet's time (cf. Tadrib, 152). According to Ḥamīdullah, "the oldest papyrus document dated 22 A.H....shows diacritical dots above the letters kh, dh, z, sh and n."

The above views are confirmed by discoveries of inscriptions dating from the third century A.D. onwards. (cf. Masādir, 25-31).

In the light of above information, it is most likely that letters were dotted during the Prophet's time and hence his instructions about it.

<sup>2</sup> 'Uyūn (Akh), i, 42.; Wuzarā', 12.

<sup>3</sup> Muslim Scholarship, 13.

<sup>4</sup> 'Uyūn (Akh), i, 42.; Imlā', 170.

<sup>5</sup> Futūḥ, 458.; Futūḥ (Goeje), 472.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, II, i, 14.; Amwāl, 115-116.; History of Persia, i, 261.; Nihāya, xvii, 56.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, II, ii, 115.; Annales, i, 1460.

It was actually the outcome of the Prophet's educational policy that literacy became 'fairly' common in Arabia.<sup>1</sup> Though special attention was paid towards religious education, the art of writing was also learnt with great interest.

From the time of the Prophet's arrival in Medina onwards we find that writing was employed for all religious, commercial, administrative and political purposes. In religious field, it was used to record, in particular, the revelation. Scribes for this purpose were appointed by the Prophet.<sup>2</sup> Some of them were permanent secretaries, while others were employed occasionally. The secretaries were as well appointed for several other administrative purposes such as corresponding with tribal chiefs<sup>3</sup>, keeping records of agricultural products and of zakāt and other taxes.<sup>4</sup> A secretary with the knowledge of foreign languages was responsible for correspondence with non-Arabs.<sup>5</sup> One secretary was reserved for writing details about the Prophet's share of the booty (maghānim an-nabī),<sup>6</sup> while another appointment was made to answer letters - within three days - in case of permanent secretary for this purpose being absent.<sup>7</sup> The latter was also the seal-keeper of the Prophet.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It should not be concluded that literacy was fully developed at this stage, for we find references which show that even leaders of certain tribes could not read and write. The case of Namir b. Tawlab, the chief of 'Ukl tribe in Yemen, comes into mind, who could not read the charter given by the Prophet, and had to get it read by someone in the market place of Medina. (cf. Amwāl, 11-12; Tab, I, ii, 30.; Ṣubḥ, xiii, 329-330.; Wathā'iq, no. 233.).

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, ii, 15, 162.

<sup>3</sup> Annales, ii, 836.

<sup>4</sup> Annales, ii, 836.; Wuzarā', 12-13.; Tarātīb, i, 121-124.; Iqd, iv, 246.

<sup>5</sup> Ṣubḥ, i, 165.; Iqd, iv, 246.

<sup>6</sup> Iqd, iv, 246.; Wuzarā', 12.

<sup>7</sup> Iqd, iv, 246-247.; Wuzarā', 12-13.

<sup>8</sup> Iqd, iv, 247.; Wuzarā', 13; Ma'ārif, 107.

In view of so much literary activity of the period, it was natural that the traditions of the Prophet be kept in written form. The companions, thus, amassed a considerable amount of ḥadīth in their sahīfas, though following the old practice of keeping information in memory, they preserved the sunna of the Prophet orally as well. Thus the recording of the tradition was done both orally and in writing.

The role of memory and writing in connection with the transmission and recording of ḥadīth has all along been a subject of discussion. Attempts have been made to overemphasise the role of one against the other. It has been commonly alleged that the memory was a preferable source of preserving ḥadīth. It is further held that the writing was resorted to only as an aid to memory and that the former got an upper hand only by the end of the first century at the earliest.

While the general conclusion that writing had to struggle hard to attain a superior position is admitted, it cannot be accepted that memory at any stage was the sole depository in which ahādīth were preserved. The fact is that the recording of traditions was done through both mediums of preserving information viz memory and writing.

#### 6. Writing and Memory:

The two main instruments of preserving information are memory and writing. The question of superiority of one over the other had always remained a matter of dispute. Contradictory views have been advanced to prove the merits of one against demerits of the other.

Right from ancient times till very recently memory was considered a better form of preserving knowledge. Writing, on the other hand, was

used as an aid or guide to memory, not as a substitute for it. "It was so employed in classical antiquity", says Albright, "where pupils were expected to memorize Homer and Virgil."<sup>1</sup> Socrates (469-399 B.C.) or one of his teachers had long ago said that he would not like to see his thoughts entrusted to the dead skins of cows instead of the living hearts of human beings.<sup>2</sup>

In India, the religious instruction in particular and education in general was imparted orally from ancient times onwards. "Not out of manuscripts or books does one learn the text", says Winternitz, "but from the mouth of the teacher, today as thousands of years ago."<sup>3</sup> Although writing had already been employed in the reign of the Buddhist King Ashoka (274-237 B.C.) who caused the religious teachings to be inscribed on rocks and pillars in India, the Vedas, the sacred Scriptures of Hindus, were first committed to writing sometimes in the eighth or ninth century A.D.<sup>4</sup>

Thus even when writing was known in this country, memory was used for religious education. Hinen Tsang (Yuen Chwang), the Chinese traveller who visited India in the seventh century A.D., records that 'oral instruction and oral tradition played an important role till about the 11th or 12th century A.D., i.e. for a long time after the introduction of writing for literary purposes.'<sup>5</sup> The vedic teachings in India continued to be imparted through oral instruction and not by books. The latter

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<sup>1</sup> Stone age, 64.

<sup>2</sup> Learned traditions, 23-24.

<sup>3</sup> Indian Literature, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Learned traditions, 2, citing Altekar's Education in Ancient India (Benaras, 1934), p. 147.

<sup>5</sup> Learned traditions, 23-24.



form, on the other hand, was considered disagreeable. Explaining as how should the vedic teachings be acquired at a time when 'writing had not only become a regular practice but also had split up into dozen script'<sup>1</sup>, the great vedic commentator Sayana says, "The text of the veda is to be learnt by the method of learning it from the lips of the teacher. It should appeal to the ear and not to the eye and therefore it was not to be reduced to writing...."<sup>2</sup>

The Arabs who were renowned for their excellent retentive memory are described to have had the same prejudice against writing. Despite the pre-Islamic tradition of writing wise sayings, poetry and other information in majalla, rawāsīm and ṣaḥīfa, the Arab culture was basically oral. The cases of Arabs' extraordinary power of memorisation are not unknown to students of history. We know fairly well that pagan Arabs used to learn by heart the long genealogical tables and lengthy poems of their war-like deeds. Even in post-Islamic period, their photographic memory remained unrivalled in history. Ḥammād (d. 156 A.H.), the narrator of the poetry of Jāhiliyya period, could recite no less than a hundred or more odes for each single letter of the Arabic alphabet.<sup>3</sup> Sha'bī (d. 103/107 A.H.) says that he knew so many verses by heart that he could continue reciting them for a month without any repetition.<sup>4</sup> Aṣma'ī (d. 216 A.H.) knew by heart 15,000 iambic poems (urjūza) and over 12,000 verses of the rajz metre alone.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Abū Tammām (d. 232 A.H.) could recite more than 14,000 verses of the poetry of the Jāhiliyya period,<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Learned traditions, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Learned traditions, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Agh, vi, 71.; Tārīkh Ādāb al-Lughā, ii, 120.

<sup>4</sup> Tdh, i, 79.

<sup>5</sup> Tārīkh Ādāb al-Lughā, ii, 115.

<sup>6</sup> Wafayāt, 335.

and Abū Daḥdāh could narrate couplets of such hundred poets who had the name : 'Amr'.<sup>1</sup>

On account of this extraordinary power of memorisation it was not surprising that the Arabs cared little for writing, especially when the writing material was also insufficient. With the advent of Islam and through the Prophet's positive step towards promotion of reading and writing, views changed in favour of writing. But the tradition of memorising could not possible be abruptly stopped. Until such time that writing became fairly common, memory continued playing its vital role. The traditions of the Prophet, like every other important information, was preserved in the store house of memory. It was considered a great honour to keep large number of traditions in memory. People boasted for their supreme power of memorisation.<sup>2</sup> The biographical works contain names of scores of traditionists who are credited to have memorised thousands of traditions. Although the number of traditions claimed to have been memorised by the traditionists are too large to be believed, yet the reports are suggestive enough to show that early traditionists possessed powerful retentive memory. Reports also indicate that learning the traditions by heart was considered a merit among religious circles.

The fact that early traditionists could memorise large number of traditions should not look surprising if viewed in historical perspective. It is a law of nature that the constant use of certain human faculty makes it more and more responsive. Since the early Arabs paid more

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<sup>1</sup> Shi'r, i, 4-5.

<sup>2</sup> "Von Kremer's edition..." JASB, 1856, p. 212.

attention to their memory, they had developed this power to its highest point. The continuous use of this faculty further sharpened the power of memorisation and ultimately they were able to memorise long passages from speeches, poems and genealogical tables of their ancestors.

So far as the memory of the companions is concerned, it can be pointed out that their retentive power was of lesser degree than those of pre-Islamic Arabs, for with the popularity of writing during the Prophet's time, full reliance on memory no more existed. People in post-Islamic period began to employ writing more often than they hitherto had done. Hence their faculty of memorisation was of lower standard than that of their ancestors. Nevertheless, due to nearness of that age, they still possessed an excellent power of memorisation. Besides, since they were simple, bedouin race, their memory was stronger than that of other cultured races of the world.

But despite their confidence in their memorisation power and reliance placed on it, the Arabs had not overlooked writing. We have already seen that writing was in use in pre-Islamic Arabia and was given due importance by the Prophet in early Islamic era. From this period onwards, the art of writing continuously progressed and was practically used for both religious and secular purposes. Thus, while memory continued playing an important role in the preservation and transmission of ḥadīth, it was never a sole instrument of accumulation of knowledge. At every stage of ḥadīth recording, writing was employed alongside the memory.

The importance of writing was highly stressed at the advent of Islam. The very first Divine revelation that came to the Prophet

commanded reading and writing<sup>1</sup>, and the first verse after migration (hijra) asked Muslims to write all their transactions, whether big or small, in black and white.<sup>2</sup>

Numerous references are found in the Qur'ān regarding writing and its accessories. There are frequent mention of book (kitāb)<sup>3</sup>, writing in general (kitābat)<sup>4</sup>, paper (qirtās),<sup>5</sup> pen (qalam)<sup>6</sup>, ink (midād),<sup>7</sup> manuscripts (ṣuḥuf)<sup>8</sup>, and the like, throughout the Qur'ān. The mention of these items - a complete list of writing material - and overemphasis of writing even the small details of business transactions, must have given an impetus to Arabs for recording other information from the Prophet.

The Prophet himself recommended both directly and indirectly the use of writing. He had given specific orders to owners of property to make a will in writing. He had said, "Should any Muslim possess property fit for testamentary will, it would not be proper for him to pass even three nights without having written a will with him."<sup>9</sup>

Thus we see that both mediums of preserving information namely

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 96: 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 2: 282.

<sup>3</sup> Kitāb (3:23); Al-Kitāb (6:157); Kutub (34:44); Maktūb (7:157).

<sup>4</sup> Kataba (9:51); Kutiba (2: 178); Yaktubu (4:81); Yaktubūna (10:21); Uktub (7:156); Kātib (2:282).

<sup>5</sup> Qirtās (6:7); Qarātīs (6:91).

<sup>6</sup> Qalam (68:1; 96:4); Aqlām (31:27).

<sup>7</sup> Midād (18:109)

<sup>8</sup> Ṣuḥufin (80:13); Ṣuḥufan (98:2); As-Ṣuḥuf (81:10 ).

<sup>9</sup> Tab, IV, i, 108.

memory and writing were available to young muslim community to preserve the traditions of the Prophet. As for the former, the Arabs were gifted with a wonderful retentive memory and could preserve thousands of aḥādīth in their hearts; as regards the latter, its employment was recommended by the Qur'ān as well as by the Prophet. Under these circumstances both sources were employed to preserve the sunna. Some of the companions who knew how to write, wrote the traditions in Saḥīfas, while others learnt them by heart.

In later years, the above two groups became precedents for two opposing views with regard to writing of traditions.

(i) Writing-Memory Controversy:

There existed among ḥadīth scholars a controversy whether traditions should be preserved and transmitted orally or in writing. Two diametrically opposed views have been presented - one favouring the writing, the other opposing it. The adherents of both views produced the Prophet's aḥādīth and other confirmatory reports in support of their theories and either alternative was well defended.

The opponents of writing consider memory as more reliable source of preserving information. They believe that when a man writes something in black and white, he tends to rely too much on the written material and does not memorise the same. In this way, the purpose of writing fails. On the other hand, when he is precluded from writing he is forced to learn the information by heart. They believe that the absence of books sharpens one's power of memorisation. Thus they consider memory as safer source of preserving knowledge and recommend, therefore, this

medium for preserving ḥadīth.<sup>1</sup> As regards writing as a source of preserving traditions, they disapprove of it.

Condemning the practice of writing, Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110 A.H.) warned: "Beware of writing, for the earlier generations had been led astray due to books."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Ibn 'Awn (d. 151 A.H.) remarked, "These books lead people astray."<sup>3</sup> His contemporary Awzā'ī (d. 157 A.H.) is reported to have made similar remarks about writing. He said, "When knowledge reached the books, it lost its glamour."<sup>4</sup> Ibrāhīm an-Nakha'ī (d. 96 A.H.) who says that he never wrote anything,<sup>5</sup> gives the following reason for his disapproval of writing: 'Whosoever writes, depends on it,'<sup>6</sup> (and thus forgets the text). Jāhiz quotes a man saying to yūnus b. Ḥabīb, "Books are bad stores of knowledge."<sup>7</sup>

The advocates of writing, on the other hand, stress the superiority of writing over memory. Abū Gilāba (d. 104 A.H.), for instance, said, "writing to me is more pleasing than forgetfulness."<sup>8</sup> Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68 A.H.), who carried with him writing tablets (alwāḥ), used to say, "The best mode of fixing knowledge is writing."<sup>9</sup>

The importance of writing has also been shown by quoting and

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 58.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VII, i, 141.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VII, i, 141.

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, i, 68. ; SD, i, 12. ; Taqyīd, 64.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VI, 189. ; Fāsil, 36b.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, VI, 189.

<sup>7</sup> Ḥayawān, i. 61.

<sup>8</sup> Bayān, i, 72. ; Taqyīd, 103.

<sup>9</sup> Taqyīd, 92.

interpreting relevant passages of the Qur'ān. Ṭabarī, while explaining the Qur'ānic phrase 'Kāna tahtahū kanzun'<sup>1</sup> remarks that according to some commentators, the 'kanz' (treasure), referred to in the verse, means 'books containing latent knowledge' (ṣuḥufan fīhā 'ilmun madfūna).<sup>2</sup> Abū 'd-Dardā' (d. 31/32 A.H.) had already explained the phrase in this sense on the authority of the Prophet.<sup>3</sup> Ibn 'Abbās also endorses this view when he says that the kanz referred to, was neither gold nor silver but it was the treasure of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Commenting on this explanation of Ibn 'Abbās, al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ (d.169 A.H.) remarked, "which other treasure can be superior to the knowledge!"<sup>5</sup>

By interpreting the word 'kanz' (treasure) in the sense of written knowledge, it has been shown that the importance of writing has been recognised in the Qur'ān itself. Actually there are clearer passages in the Qur'ān which not only approve of writing but recommend its employment in day to day transactions. Some of the verses showing the superiority and importance of writing are as under:

- (a) "O ye who believe! When ye contract a debt for a fixed term, record it in writing....Be not averse to writing down (the contract) whether it be small or great..." (Qur'ān, ii:282)
- (b) When the Jews accused God of having created daughters, God challenged their fallacious accusation and said, "Then produce your writ (fa'tū bikitābikum) if you are truthful." (Qur'ān, xxxvii:157)

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 18:83.

<sup>2</sup> Tacyīd, 117,n.

<sup>3</sup> Tacyīd, 117.

<sup>4</sup> Tacyīd, 117.

<sup>5</sup> Tacyīd, 118.



- (c) When the Jews disbelieved in the revelation of heavenly books on human beings by saying, 'Allāh hath naught revealed unto a human being', God told Muḥammad to ask them: "Who revealed the Book which Moses brought, a light and guidance for mankind, which ye have put on parchments which ye show..." (Qur'ān, vi:92)
- (d) In proof of their false accusation that God had a partner, Jews were asked to produce a testamentary evidence: 'Bring me a Scripture before this (Scripture), or some vestige of knowledge (in support of what ye say), if ye are truthful.'  
(Qur'ān, xlv:4)

Thus we see that importance of writing was recognised both by the Qur'ān and the Prophet. The latter not only encouraged the art of writing but himself used it in religious and political purposes. The literate companions and successors followed his example and wrote down the Prophet's traditions in ṣaḥīfas.

Although 'Umar is described as a great opponent of ḥadīth writing who had in fact burnt the available written records of traditions, we find few reports indicating his favourable attitude to writing. The story of his seriously considering to compile a corpus of tradition<sup>1</sup> is well known and authentic. No definite reason is given as why he first thought to collect the traditions and then dropped the whole idea. From the story it cannot be deduced that 'Umar had no desire to have the traditions preserved in books. Looking at his religious zeal and his interest in legal matters, a contrary conclusion will be drawn. It appears that too much popularity of ḥadīth during his time had endangered the purity of the text of the Qur'ān. He feared that a corpus

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, III, i, 206. ; Ilm, 4a.

of ḥadīth might compete the Qur'ān and hence he forbade the official recording of the former. Thus despite his wish to preserve the ahādīth in books, he could not do so in the wider interest of the community.

That he was in favour of writing ḥadīth is evident from the report in which he says, "Preserve knowledge in books"<sup>1</sup> - an exhortation to collect the 'ilm i.e. traditions. He himself used to quote ahādīth from the Prophet in his official letters<sup>2</sup> and had collected a document regarding taxation and other financial matters.<sup>3</sup> It was he who introduced the system of registers in official business.<sup>4</sup> All these facts show that he was not against writing ḥadīth. The reason why he did not compile the traditions seems his cautious attitude towards the Qur'ān. In order to safeguard the purity of the Qur'ānic text, he could not materialise his plan of codifying sunna.

Apart from 'Umar, other companions also believed in the superiority of writing over memory. Caliph 'Alī (d. 40 A.H.), who is credited to have possessed a ṣahīfa containing few legal ahādīth, encouraged the writing of traditions. He exhorted people to spend money on buying writing material<sup>5</sup> and to preserve the traditions therein.<sup>6</sup> Influenced by his exhortation, Ḥārith b. 'Abd Allāh al-A'war (d. 65 A.H.) bought few sheets and got some traditions written down.<sup>7</sup> 'Alī's son, Ḥasan (d. 50 A.H.) followed his father's example and advised his own sons and

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<sup>1</sup> Bayān, i, 72.; SD, i, 127.; Taqyīd, 88.; Fāsil, 36a.

<sup>2</sup> SB, iv, 82-83 (Libās).; SIM, ii, 166 (Farā'id).; Amwāl, 362, 363, 366, et passim.

<sup>3</sup> SAD, ii, 133-134 (Zakāt), ḥadīth nos. 1570, 1571.; Amwāl, 362, 363, 366, et passim.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, III, ii, 202-203.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 90-91.; 'Ilm, 11b.; Fāsil, 35a.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 90-91.; Tab, VI, 116.; 'Ilm, 11b.; Fāsil, 35a.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, VI, 116...

nephews (Ḥusayn's sons) to preserve the knowledge i.e. ḥadīth in writing and keep it (for permanent record) in the house.<sup>1</sup> Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68A.H.), a great supporter of ḥadīth writing who used to carry with him writing tablets (alwāḥ), remarked, "Preserve the knowledge (in writing)"<sup>2</sup> and "the best (store) in which the knowledge should be preserved is 'book'."<sup>3</sup> He encouraged his students to buy writing material in order to preserve the traditions in it.<sup>4</sup>

Anas b. Mālīk (d. 93 A.H.) also believed very strongly in the superiority of writing over memory. He used to say, "The knowledge of those who have not committed it to writing is not considered as knowledge to us."<sup>5</sup> It is reported that once when he heard an interesting ḥadīth from the Prophet, he asked one of his sons to write it down.<sup>6</sup> He had given a general instruction to his sons to preserve the knowledge in books (qayyidū 'l-ilm bi'l-kitāb).<sup>7</sup>

It is important to point out that the word 'knowledge' ('ilm), in above reports was used in the sense of the traditions of the Prophet and not in its literal sense.

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<sup>1</sup> SD, i, 126. ; Bayān, i, 83. ; Taqyīd, 91.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ilm, 11b. ; Taqyīd, 92. It should be noted that Ibn 'Abbās uses the word 'taqyīd' for 'recording' and himself explains it by the term 'kitāba' (writing). He says, 'qayyidū 'l-ilm, wa taqyīduhū kitābuhū' (Fetter the knowledge, and to fether means 'to write down') - (cf. Taqyīd, 92. ; Fāsil, 35b.)

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 92.

<sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 92.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 96. The same statement is ascribed to Mu'āwīya b. Qurra (d. 113 A.H.) as well. (cf. Bayān, i, 74. ; Taqyīd, 109.)

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 96.

<sup>7</sup> Taqyīd, 96-97. ; Bayān, i, 73. ; Tab, VII, i, 14.

Aghānī has preserved an interesting anecdote about Dhū'r-rumma's view regarding writing and memory. It is reported that Dhū'r-rumma (d. 117 A.H.) was once asked, "which form of the following two is correctly spelled : (i) 'Uzayr ibn Allāh or (ii) 'Uzayr bin Allāh.?" Dhū'r-rumma replied that the form containing more letters (i.e. the former) was correct. Thereupon the questioner enquired if he knew the art of writing (whereby he could tell the number of letters each phrase contained). Hearing this, Dhū'r-rumma put his finger on his mouth and said, "(Although I know how to write) I conceal this fact, for it is considered a disqualification among us."<sup>1</sup>

The above report clearly shows that the tussle between writing and memory was still on in Dhū'r-rumma's time. Although it appears from the report that public opinion at that time was in favour of memory, it is also apparent that the importance of writing was fully acknowledged by scholars who used to write even secretly. The same Dhū'r-rumma, who in this report, tries to conceal his knowledge of the art of writing, in other report, expresses his dislike of those who relied on memory. He says to one 'Isā b. 'Umar, "write down my poetry, for the written word is more pleasing to me than memory."<sup>2</sup>

This was the view of a poet - the last mukhadrimī poet of Arabia. As regards traditionists' opinions about writing and memory, Ibn Jurayj (d. 150 A.H.) says, "Write down (ḥadīth), for preservation of knowledge is nothing compared to its being written down (Uktub, famā qayd al-'ilm bi shay' mithl al-kitāb)"<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Mu'tamar b. Sulaymān (d. 187 A.H.)

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<sup>1</sup> Agh (Būlāq), xvi, 121.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 119. ; Traditions, 16. ; Ḥayawān, i, 41.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 112-113.

relates, "My father wrote to me...'Buy books and write down knowledge ('ilm), for wealth is transitory but knowledge is lasting'."<sup>1</sup>

Jāḥiẓ, the great lover of books, proves the superiority of writing over memory by quoting Qur'ānic story of Sulaymān and queen of Sabā , in which the words Kitāb, risāla and 'ilm have been frequently used. It is also mentioned in the Qur'ān that the letters were exchanged between Sulaymān and the people of Sabā .<sup>2</sup> From all this, Jāḥiẓ deduces that ~~the~~ writing is better than oral messages.<sup>3</sup> He makes a general remark regarding the importance of writing and its superiority by saying, "Had not the books been compiled...most of the knowledge would have gone waste(batāla) and the authority of forgetfulness would have overcome the authority of retention."<sup>4</sup> He quotes an epithet in his Kitāb al-Ḥayawān which also shows the importance of writing. It runs as follows: "A black space (on a sheet) is better... than a white one."<sup>5</sup>

Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643 A.H.) considers books as best depositories of preserving information. Referring to compilation of ḥadīth he says, "Had they (the traditions) not been collected in books, they would have been lost."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 112-113. ; Bayān, i, 58. ; Fāsil, 35b.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 27:28. .

<sup>3</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 97.

<sup>4</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 47.

<sup>5</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 58.

<sup>6</sup> Robson, "Tradition, the second foundation of Islam", Muslim World, XLI:I, (January, 1951), p. 26, n., Citing Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ's 'Ulūm al-ḥadīth (Aleppo, 1350/1931), p. 71.

(ii) Advocates and Opponents of ḥadīth writing:-

The question of supremacy of memory over writing and vice versa remained unsettled for quite some time. It was much discussed towards the end of the first century after hijra. The contradictory arguments in support of writing and memory represent the views of two rival groups of ḥadīth scholars in early Islamic era. These scholars may be divided into two groups of 'advocates' and 'opponents' of ḥadīth writing, though the majority of them approved of writing at some stage of their life.

Those who upheld the view against writing down of ḥadīth either shifted to their rival group in later life or regretted for not writing in their earlier career. Some - and their number is rather negligible - however, remained opposed to writing until the end and were so convinced of their viewpoint that they destroyed their already written collections.<sup>1</sup> But this was done with purely sincere motive. Among this group were those traditionists who either themselves destroyed their written collections or left a will to their executors to bury or burn their written treasures.

Some of the traditionists had written the traditions for the purpose of memorisation only. These scholars also destroyed their written material after having committed the traditions to memory. Since these scholars did practically write the traditions, they cannot be regarded as 'opponents' of ḥadīth writing.

Thus the ḥadīth scholars may be divided into the following two broad categories:

(a) Opponents of ḥadīth writing: The group of these scholars disapproved

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<sup>1</sup> Historical Sources, 114-115.

of ḥadīth writing and favoured only oral transmission of traditions. With the passage of time, the number of these scholars decreased due to their gradual shifting to their rival camp of 'advocates'.

(b) Advocates of ḥadīth writing: The scholars of this group who preferred writing over memory advocated the writing down of ḥadīth. The number of scholars in this group continually increased, for more and more people joined it after realising the importance of writing.

The scholars (i) who favoured the writing of ḥadīth for memorisation alone and (ii) the scholars who did not practically write but regretted for not doing so in their later life, also belong to this group.

One finds among the list of 'advocates', few controversial figures whose names occur in both the lists. This is due to the fact that contradictory reports have reached us about their viewpoints. To take for example, the scholars like Sa'īd b. Jubayr (d. 94 A.H.), Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 94 A.H.), 'Amir b. Sharāḥīl ash-Sha'bī (d. 105 A.H.) and Daḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim (d. 105 A.H.) have been described as 'opponents of ḥadīth writing' by Ibn Sa'd<sup>1</sup>, Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī<sup>2</sup>, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr<sup>3</sup> and Tāshkūprizade<sup>4</sup> respectively, whereas other reports consider all of them as 'advocates' of ḥadīth writing.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 179.

<sup>2</sup> Tagyid, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 67.

<sup>4</sup> Sa'āda, ii, 233.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VI, 179.; Tagyid, 100, 103.; Bayān, i, 72.; Ulūm, 43.; Buhūth, 148



Of Sa'īd b. Jubayr it is said that he wrote down ahādīth from Ibn 'Abbās. It is reported that he was so particular about writing that when, during a journey, he heard some traditions from Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar he used to write it on the saddle and later, on returning home, transferred it into a note-book.<sup>1</sup> In another report, he is reported to have said that I used to write the dictation of my teacher on my note-book, on my palm and even on my boots (fī alwāhī, fī saḥīfatī, fī's-saḥīfa, fī kaffī, fī na'li, fī zahr na'li)."<sup>2</sup> He himself did not object when his own students wrote ahādīth from him<sup>3</sup> - a proof of his favourable attitude towards writing.

'Amir ash-Sha'bī was one of the earliest compilers of books, who is reported to have written Kitāb al-Farā'id,<sup>4</sup> Kitāb al-Jarāhāt<sup>5</sup>, a work on maghāzī<sup>6</sup>, and few scrolls of ahādīth regarding juristic and legal matters.<sup>7</sup> Thus to mention him among the 'opponents' of

<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 77b.; Tab, VI, 179. ; Taqyīd, 103. ; Bayān, i, 72. ; 'Ulūm, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VI, 179. ; Taqyīd, 102.; Fāsil, 35a, 35b.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 103, n.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, ix, 177.; Bagh, xii, 232.

<sup>5</sup> Bagh, xii, 232.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, x, 40.; Jarh, IV,i, 361.; Bagh, xii, 230.

<sup>7</sup> Kifāya, 386.

ḥadīth writing is a mistake. He was so keen in preserving the written record of ḥadīth that he had asked his students to write everything which they heard; if no writing material was available then on the wall even.<sup>1</sup>

Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib and Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim were likewise 'advocates',<sup>2</sup> and not 'opponents' of ḥadīth writing. The latter is reported to have said, "when I heard something, I wrote it even on a wall."<sup>3</sup> He had written a commentary on the Qur'ān<sup>4</sup>, and had dictated a book on manāsik to Ḥusayn b. 'Aqīl.<sup>5</sup>

The above reports clearly show that our representative traditionists were not against writing of ḥadīth. The same goes with the majority of those who are mentioned in the list of 'opponents'. After reading contradictory reports about traditionists' viewpoints regarding writing of ḥadīth, it can be concluded that either, one of the two reports is unauthentic, or the said traditionists were at first the 'opponents' of writing and later shifted to 'advocates' group. The second probability is most likely.

Among the 'advocates' group, we find names of scholars who, in their later lives, regretted for not having preserved traditions in black and white. To this class belong 'Urwa b. az-Zubayr (d. 94 A.H.) and Mansūr b. al-Mu'tamar (d. 132 A.H.).<sup>6</sup> The former is reported to

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 174. ; Fāsil, 36a.

<sup>2</sup> Buhūth, 148. ; Bayān, i, 72.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 72.

<sup>4</sup> Jarḥ, I, ii, 319. ; Fihrist, 51.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, i, 72.

<sup>6</sup> Tac'yīd, 60. ; Bayān, i, 75. ; Tab, VI, 189.

have said, "I had written ahādīth and then effaced it; now I wish I had not erased it and could get it back even at the cost of my wealth and son."<sup>1</sup> The latter regretted the loss in these words: "I did not write (but used to memorise). Now I wish I had written them down, no matter if I had memorised only half of what I had heard."<sup>2</sup> Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd (d. 143/144 A.H.) is also reported to have repented for not having written the traditions.<sup>3</sup>

In the same 'advocates' group we find the traditionists who favoured the writing only for memorisation purposes. They approved the writing only as an aid to memory. To this class of traditionists belong Masrūq b. al-Ajda' (d. 63 A.H.)<sup>4</sup>, Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110 A.H.)<sup>5</sup>, Khālīd al-Ḥadhdhā' (d. 141 A.H.)<sup>6</sup>, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Ḥarmala (d. 145 A.H.)<sup>7</sup>, Sufyān ath-Thawrī (d. 161 A.H.)<sup>8</sup> and 'Āsim b. Ḍamra (d. 174 A.H.)<sup>9</sup>.

It seems that the origin of this practice goes back to the time of the Prophet, for we find various reports where permission to write Prophet's ḥadīth was obtained on the pretext of weak memory. Thus Abū Hurayra (d. 59 A.H.)<sup>10</sup>, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ (d. 58/65 A.H.)<sup>11</sup>, Rāfi' b. Khadīj (d. 74 A.H.)<sup>12</sup>, an unnamed Anṣarite<sup>13</sup>, and one

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<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 35b, 36a. ; Taqyīd, 60. ; Bayān, i, 75.

<sup>2</sup> Fāsil, 40a, Taqyīd, 60,n.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 111. ; Bayān, i, 74,

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, i, 66. ; Taqyīd, 58-59.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VII, i, 141. ; Fāsil 36b.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 59. ; 'Ulūm, 78.

<sup>7</sup> Taqyīd, 99. ; Bayān, i, 73. ; History of Persia, i, 273. ; Mst, ii, 196-197/183.

<sup>8</sup> SD, i, 125. ; Taqyīd, 58, n. ; 'Ulūm, 78.

<sup>9</sup> Taqyīd, 59. ; 'Ulūm, 78.

<sup>10</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 56.

<sup>11</sup> Ta'wīl, 365. ; SD, i, 125. ; Bayān, i, 73. ; Tab, VII, ii, 189. ; Fāsil, 34a.

<sup>12</sup> Taqyīd, 72. ; Manār, x, 763. ; Fāsil, 35a.

<sup>13</sup> Taqyīd, 65-67. ; Saḥīfa, 21-22. ; Fāsil, 35a.

other anonymous person<sup>1</sup>, are all reported to have complained to the Prophet that they did not possess strong memory to remember his sayings and sought, therefore, his permission to record them in writing.

But this does not mean that permission to write ḥadīth was given only when the memory was weak, for we have seen that in the case of Abū Shāh, the Yemenite, who was given the Prophet's sermon in writing, the question of memory was not brought forward. He made a plain request to have the sermon in writing and the Prophet ordered someone to write it for him.<sup>2</sup>

(iii) Origin of writing - memory controversy:-

The question arises as when did the memory-writing controversy first start. According to Guillaume, the controversy belongs to the age when the critical collections of traditions were made.<sup>3</sup> Sprenger considers 60 A.H. as the most probable date when the question whether it was lawful to write down ḥadīth was much agitated.<sup>4</sup> But most probably, the origin of the controversy goes back to the reign of 'Umar I, who, for the sake of purity of the text of the Qur'ān, forbade his people to write down traditions, and even burnt some of the manuscripts in pursuance of his order.<sup>6</sup>

'Umar's prohibition to give undue importance to ḥadīth, by way of

<sup>1</sup> Tagyīd, 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> Fāsil, 34a.

<sup>3</sup> Traditions, 17.

<sup>4</sup> "Origin of writing...", JASB, XXV, 1856, pp. 380-381.

<sup>5</sup> Tagyīd, 57.; Bayān, i, 64.; Manār, x, 767.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, V, 140.; Tagyīd, 52.

compiling it in books like that of the Qur'ān, presupposes the rampancy of ḥadīth material during his caliphate. It seems that ḥadīth was being written when 'Umar's prohibitive order was issued. This must have resulted in differences of opinion among fellow companions - some abiding by the order and refraining from writing ḥadīth, while others continuing the practice of writing privately with complete disregard to official order. In this way, 'Umar's order to refrain from writing became the starting point of the controversy. So far as the preservation of ḥadīth as such was concerned, there was no dispute at that time, for 'Umar himself had taken practical steps to safeguard and to popularise the sunna of the Prophet. The main controversy was with regard to method of its preservation.

In pursuance of his order, a small minority of the companions refrained from committing the ḥadīth to writing. We find only few names from amongst the companions who are described to have remained staunch opponents of written ḥadīth to the end. The majority, however, either abided by the order for only a short period, or disregarded it and secretly occupied themselves in reading and writing ḥadīth. Ironically enough, his own son 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar (d. 74 A.H.) gave up the prejudice against writing in his later life.

The controversy, started in 'Umar's reign, could not be settled for centuries, as a result of which we find names of 'advocates' and 'opponents' of ḥadīth writing in first, second and even in third century A.H. However, "in the 9th century A.D. (i.e. 3rd century A.H.)", says Rosenthal, "it was probably admitted that all branches of literature (including of course, the traditions) relied for their preservation upon written fixation."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Muslim Scholarship, 6.

## 7. Pro-ḥadīth and Anti-ḥadīth ḥadīth:

After discussing the question of supremacy of memory over writing and vice versa let us now consider the contradictory reports, ascribed to the Prophet, in favour and against writing of ḥadīth. The classical ḥadīth collections contain numerous reports where permission is given by the Prophet to write down his sayings. At the same time, they contain a large number of traditions in which the Prophet forbade the writing of ahādīth. We shall take up these traditions here to explain away their contradiction.

- (i) Sample examples:- The oft-quoted prohibitive ḥadīth has been transmitted by Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (d. 74 A.H.), who reports the Prophet as saying: "Do not write from me anything except the Qur'ān<sup>1</sup>; whoever has taken down (what he has heard) from me anything save the Qur'ān, let him efface it."<sup>2</sup> In another ḥadīth, Abū Sa'īd reports: "We asked permission of writing from the Prophet but the latter refused it."<sup>3</sup> Another version of this ḥadīth is given by Abū Hurayra (d. 59 A.H.). He relates that once the Prophet saw him along with others writing something. On enquiry as what they were writing, the Prophet was told that it was his sayings which they had heard from him. Thereupon he forbade them to write these sayings.<sup>4</sup> Another prohibitive tradition is reported by Zayd b. Thābit (d. 45 A.H.) who relates that 'the Prophet disallowed writing down his sayings.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In another version, exception also includes the tashahhud (the formula recited in the prayer) and rasā'il (letters). (cf. Taqyīd, 93 (for tashahhud), 43 (for rasā'il)).

<sup>2</sup> SD, i, 119.; Bayān, i, 63.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 32-33. ; SD, i, 119. ; Jāmi', x, 134 ('Ilm). ; Fāsil, 36a.

<sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 33-35.

<sup>5</sup> Jāmi', x, 134 ('Ilm).

As against these and other prohibitory traditions,<sup>1</sup> the advocates of writing cite permissive aḥādīth in which the Prophet gives permission to write down his sayings. According to one well known ḥadīth in this connection, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ (d. 58/65 A.H.) sought permission to write down the Prophet's traditions which was readily given.<sup>2</sup> Similar permission is reported to have been given to Rāfi' b. Khadīj (d. 74 A.H.)<sup>3</sup>, to Anas b. Mālik (d. 91 A.H.)<sup>4</sup>, to an unnamed Anṣārīte Companion<sup>5</sup>, and to another anonymous person.<sup>6</sup> The number of permissive aḥādīth also abound in classical ḥadīth collections. The following may serve as further examples. In reply to various queries put to him on different occasions, the Prophet is reported to have said, "Preserve knowledge (ḥadīth) in writing (qayyidū 'l- 'ilm bi l-kitāb)"<sup>7</sup>; "Take help from your right hand (to write)"<sup>8</sup>; and "write from me, for by God, whatever comes from my mouth is nothing but truth."<sup>9</sup>

The above traditions provide direct and indirect proofs of the Prophet's permission to record his sayings. They are found alongside the prohibitive traditions in all canonical ḥadīth collections.

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 93.; Sunna (Sib), 238.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VII, ii, 189.; Bayān, i, 73.; Taqyīd, 68.; Tabyīn, ii, 24.; Manār, x, 766.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 72.

<sup>4</sup> Tabyīn, 24, 39.; Taqyīd, 69.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 65-68.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 65-66.

<sup>7</sup> Taqyīd, 69, 70, 97.; Tabyīn, 24.; Bayān, i, 73.; Manār, x, 763.; Bagh, x, 46.; SD, i, 126-127.

<sup>8</sup> Jāmi', x, 134-136. ('Ilm).; Taqyīd, 65.

<sup>9</sup> Ta'wīl, 365.; SD, i, 125.; Bayān, i, 71.; Sunna (Sib), 73.; Taqyīd, 74, 77-81. .



(ii) Harmonisation:

We have seen in the above discussion that two types of traditions have come down to us with regard to writing ḥadīth, one allowing, the other forbidding the writing of non-Qur'ānic material. Thus we find an apparent contradiction between these traditions. It provided a topic of academic discussion for students of ḥadīth. The scholars have explained the contradiction in various ways which we outline hereunder.

(a) Ban not permanent - Theory of abrogation:-

The majority of the arguments, in harmonising the contradictory traditions, revolve round the theory of abrogation, which is as follows:

It is generally believed that the Prophet had forbidden the recording of ḥadīth in the beginning for fear of confusion with the registered Qur'ānic verses<sup>1</sup>. After a certain lapse of time, when the danger of confusion no more existed, the Prophet allowed his companions to write down the traditions.<sup>2</sup> The reports about the interdiction of writing down ḥadīth do not explain the occasion, but circumstantial evidences go to prove that they are prior in origin than those

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<sup>1</sup> Muḥaddithūn, 124. ; As-sunna, 306. ; Sunna (Sib), 72.;  
Tagyīd, 57,93.

<sup>2</sup> Muḥaddithūn, 124. ; Tawīl, 365-366. ; 'Ulūm, 20-21. ; Buḥūth, 145.;  
As-sunna, 306.

permitting the recording of his sayings.<sup>1</sup> The ban on writing was, therefore, temporary which was lifted by later permission to write down aḥādīth. The ḥadīth regarding the Prophet's intention to write something at his death bed,<sup>2</sup> is quoted in support of this theory. Abū Zahw, after quoting this incident, states that this clearly indicates that the permission to write must have abrogated the ban.<sup>3</sup>

But Rashīd Riḍā and his followers are of the opinion that the traditions which forbid the writing of ḥadīth are of later date than the one in which permission was given to write down.<sup>4</sup> Riḍā's view could not gain enough support and was rejected by the majority of traditionists. Even his own pupil, Khulī challenged his views and accepted the traditional view that the pro-ḥadīth ḥadīth is of later date than the anti-ḥadīth ḥadīth.<sup>5</sup> Sibā'ī also refutes Riḍā's arguments and says, "Riḍā's ideas...is easily rejected merely by pointing to the saying of the Prophet, uttered on his death-bed."<sup>6</sup>

Apart from the theory of abrogation, discussed above, other explanations are also given for the contradiction in the Prophet's aḥādīth with regard to its writing. They are detailed hereunder.

(b) Ban for certain category of people only:-

Although the order of prohibition of writing is couched in general terms, yet it applied to such companions only who were either ~~not~~

<sup>1</sup> Methodology, 36. ; Buḥūth, 145. ; Sunna (Sib), 74.

<sup>2</sup> Annales, i, 1806-1807. ; Tab, II, ii, 36-38. ; 'Uḷūm, 23,n. The ḥadīth is popularly known as ḥadīth qirṭās. Ibn Sa'd, in his Tabaṭāt, has given almost all versions of this ḥadīth.

<sup>3</sup> Authenticity, 52.

<sup>4</sup> Manār, X, 767.

<sup>5</sup> Buḥūth, 145. ; Sunna (Sib), 74. ; Methodology, 36.

<sup>6</sup> Authenticity, 54.

capable of memorising his traditions well or not well trained in the art of writing.<sup>1</sup> The companions like 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ and others who wished to write down his sayings were allowed to do so. The existence of sahīfas of such companions are indicative enough to prove that the order of prohibition did not apply to these companions.

The Prophet's permission to write down his sermon for Abū Shāh<sup>2</sup> shows that writing of ḥadīth was not totally banned. The interdiction, then, must have been for definite purpose, which we shall discuss presently.

Explaining the apparent contradiction in permissive and prohibitive ahādīth, Ibn Qutayba (d. 276 A.H.) remarks that the order of the prohibition is either abrogated by the later permission of writing, or the permission was peculiar to 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, for he used to write in Syriac and Arabic while other companions with the exception of one or two, were not so competent.<sup>3</sup> In other words the ban was neither permanent nor general.

The permissive ahādīth also give an impression that the permission to write was given only to those who complained about their weak memory. It can be concluded therefore, that those who could retain his sayings into memory were not allowed to write. This conclusion, however, is untenable on the ground that Abū Shāh was allowed to write though he did not complain of his weak memory.

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<sup>1</sup> As-sunna, 308.

<sup>2</sup> Fāṣil, 34a.; Bayān, i, 70.; Taḥyīd, 86.; As-sunna, 308.

<sup>3</sup> Ta'wīl, 365-366.; Taḥyīd (Intr.), 9.

(c) Ban on official registration:-

The Prophet's prohibition to write down his sayings do not seem to refer to the recording as such, for at least a few companions did actually write his sayings. It was meant rather to stop people from making official record of these sayings like that of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> This is clearly indicated in the statement: "Do not make note-books for ḥadīth like the note-books made for the portions of the Qur'ān (lā tattakhidhū li'l-ḥadīth karārīs ka karārīs al-maṣāḥif)"<sup>2</sup>

It was perhaps due to this ban on official registration that no formal arrangements could be made to preserve the Prophet's ḥadīth. But it is a fact that without any conscious attempt to codify his sayings and actions, the companions did preserve written aḥādīth at least for their personal use.<sup>3</sup>

(d) Ban on recording the Qur'ān and ḥadīth on the same sheet:-

The prohibition is believed to have referred to the writing of ḥadīth on the same sheet on which the Qur'ān used to be written.<sup>4</sup> This explanation seems convincing in view of the mention of the word 'Qur'ān' twice in the report prohibiting the writing of ḥadīth.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the Qur'ānic verses were in the process of being revealed, and the text was at this stage still incomplete and was liable to be mixed up with the Prophet's own words (for he was the mouthpiece of both the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth) make the above explanation believable.

<sup>1</sup> Authenticity, 54.

<sup>2</sup> Sunna (Sib), 74.; Taḥyīd, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Sunna (Sib), 74.; Authenticity, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Ulūm, 20.; Muḥaddithūn, 124.; Authenticity, 51, n.

<sup>5</sup> The report runs as follows: 'Do not write from me anything except the Qur'ān; whosoever has taken down from me anything save the Qur'ān, let him efface it.' (cf. Bayān, i, 63.)

Although we do not know the exact date when the prohibition to write on the same sheet was issued, yet an historical event of 7/8 A.H. provides a probable date for issuance of this prohibitive order. It is reported that once a shipload of yemenites called on the Prophet and embraced Islam. Some of these Yemenites knew reading and writing to whom the Prophet gave a few copies of the chapters of the Qur'ān to read and learn by heart. It so happened that these men started writing the Prophet's discourse on the marginal blank space of the copies of their Qur'ān. The Prophet, thereupon, forbade them to write down his sayings on it.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of the above historical anecdote we can say that the traditions interdicting the writing of ḥadīth, though couched in general term, refer to writing of ḥadīth on the same sheet on which the Qur'ān was written. The prohibition was in fact a safeguard against mixing up of the non-Qur'ānic material with that of the Qur'ān, causing thereby a confusion in the minds of the reader.

The above anecdote also provides a probable date for the origin of the prohibitive ḥadīth.

(iii) Purpose of Interdiction:

It is almost unanimously accepted that the prohibitive traditions were abrogated by the later permissive ones and the recording of the Prophet's ḥadīth was done at least in later part of Muḥammad's life.

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<sup>1</sup> Sahīfa, 64.

<sup>2</sup> Sunna (Sib), 72.; Tdh, iii, 152.

The question now arises as to why at all did he forbid the recording of his sayings. The scholars differ in ascertaining the Prophet's motives behind this prohibition. The probable reasons assigned to this prohibitive order are given as under:

(a) To preserve the purity of the Qur'ānic text:-

It is said that the main motive behind the Prophet's interdiction to write down his sayings was to keep the Qur'ānic text unpolluted.<sup>1</sup> At this initial stage of the revelation it was feared that the words of the Prophet might be mixed up with those of the Qur'ān. This apprehension was based on two valid reasons. Firstly, the words of the Prophet were considered as words of wisdom by devoted companions who wished to record them after the fashion of the old tradition of recording hikma. As the mouthpiece of both the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth was the same person, namely the Prophet, there was a likelihood that some of Qur'ānic phrases be taken as sayings of the Prophet. Secondly, sometimes the words of the Prophet used to be written on the marginal space of the same sheet on which the Qur'ān was written. There was, therefore, great possibility of the Qur'ānic text being mixed up with the Prophet's traditions. Hence the interdiction of writing the latter.

Furthermore, there were only a few persons, at this time, who possessed so much juristic acumen as to distinguish between the Qur'ānic passages and the sayings of the Prophet. Under these circumstances, the Prophet forbade his companions to write down his sayings at this initial stage.

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<sup>1</sup> Sunna (Sib), 72.; Tac̣yīd, 57,93.; Tdh, iii, 152.

(b) Not to compete with the Qur'ān:-

It is also probable that the prohibition to write ḥadīth was meant to keep the authority of the tradition inferior to that of the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> In the words of Browne, "[Due to the fear that the ahādīth] might become invested, to the prejudice of the Book of God, with an undue authority" their writing was prohibited.<sup>2</sup>

We know that there was no restriction on the writing of the Qur'ān; instead, the secretaries were appointed to write the revelation. The position of ḥadīth was different; it was not to be given the same authority as that of the Qur'an. Had the traditions been given the same importance, it would have competed the Qur'ān. Hence no official registration of the traditions and that is why the Prophet's interdiction to write his sayings.

(c) Not to distract people from the Qur'ān:-

According to some traditionists the prohibition of ḥadīth writing was meant to keep alive the interest of newly converts in the Qur'ān.<sup>3</sup> As the Qur'ān was in the process of being revealed and had not yet been codified, more attention was to be paid to this Book than to the sayings of the Prophet. Since the Prophet's words were also held in great esteem and were considered words of wisdom, their writing and preservation, after the pre-Islamic fashion, was likely to have distracted the attention of Muslims from their primary source of law viz the Qur'ān. Hence the Prophet forbade them to attend to ḥadīth so seriously

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<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 37a.

<sup>2</sup> History of Persia, i, 273.

<sup>3</sup> Tacyīd, 57.; Buḥūth, 144-145.



as to neglect the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, while he made formal arrangements to record the revelations, he prohibited the companions to record his own sayings. The first two caliphs also adopted the same policy of paying more attention to the Qur'ān. Caliph 'Umar, for instance, during his caliphate, prohibited a group of people from narrating ḥadīth to the Qur'ān readers (Qurra') of Iraq lest they get interested in ḥadīth and be deviated from the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

Personally, he entertained for quite a long time the idea of compiling an authentic corpus of ḥadīth but gave it up<sup>3</sup>, thinking, probably, that it would prove a distraction from the Qur'ān.

#### 8. Authenticity of prohibitory traditions:

The traditionists have assigned the above probable reasons of the Prophet's ban of ḥadīth writing on the assumption that the reports about the interdiction have genuinely emanated from the Prophet. But looking at the prohibitory ahādīth critically, it appears that the reports, with the exception of one, are lacking in reliable narrators, hence liable to be rejected.

The main transmitters of these prohibitive ahādīth are Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Abū Hurayra and Zayd b. Thābit. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī's ḥadīth has two versions, one of which is transmitted by an unreliable narrator named 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Zayd.<sup>4</sup> This version is, therefore, unacceptable.

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<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 37a.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, ii, 120-121.; Tawjīh, 18.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ilm, 4a.; Tab, III, i, 206.

<sup>4</sup> In the words of Ibn Hibbān, "He was a weak narrator, who unknowingly reversed the text and put a complete isnād in the interrupted one. He deserves, therefore, to be abandoned." (cf. Tahdh, vi, 178-179).

The second main transmitter is Abū Hurayra, who also has this 'Abd ar-Rahmān in his Isnād. This report also becomes weak on this basis and can be declared unreliable. Lastly, Zayd b. Thābit's version is only mursal<sup>1</sup> which cannot be called perfect authentic ḥadīth.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Zayd himself was in favour of writing ḥadīth. How, then, could he narrate a prohibitory tradition from the Prophet?

There remains, therefore, only one version of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī's ḥadīth which is worth considering. Although this version is also declared unreliable by Bukhārī, yet it is considered authentic by other authorities, including Muslim.<sup>3</sup> It is only this version which can be considered representative of prohibitory ahādīth, and for which several explanations have been given.

Apart from the theory of abrogation, according to which this ḥadīth was cancelled by subsequent permissive traditions, the above version can be explained from different angles as well. In one version Abū Sa'īd says, "I sought permission from the Prophet to write down ḥadīth but the latter refused."<sup>4</sup> As against this, we find a report in which the Prophet allowed 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ to write ḥadīth from him.<sup>5</sup> By comparing these two traditions in particular and all permissive and prohibitive traditions in general, one can infer that while permission to write was given to some companions, to others it was refused. Abū Sa'īd's case unfortunately fell in the second category. This proves that the ban on writing, if any, was not a general one.

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<sup>1</sup> The ḥadīth with an incomplete isnād, falling short of the name of a companion, is known as mursal. (cf. Tahdīth, 114.)

<sup>2</sup> Muslim says, "A mursal ḥadīth is unacceptable." (cf. SM, i, (Intr.), 15.)

<sup>3</sup> Bā'ith, 149.; Fath, i, 218.; Ulūm, 20, n.; Taqyīd, 29-32.

<sup>4</sup> SD, i, 119.; As-Suṭha, 306.; Fāsil, 36a.; Taqyīd, 32-33.; Jāmi', x, 133-134 ('Ilm)

<sup>5</sup> Fāsil, 34a.; Also see Taqyīd, 69.

In another version, Abū Sa'īd says, "we used to write nothing but the Qur'ān and at-tashahhud (a formula recited in the prayer)."<sup>1</sup> In this version he includes tashahhud among the matters which were allowed to be written down. Since the tashahhud - a subject matter of ḥadīth - was also non-Qur'ānic material and was allowed to be written down, it cannot be claimed that the Prophet had forbidden to record everything save that of the Qur'ān. Thus, the internal criticism, based on the matn of a ḥadīth, also proves the inauthenticity of Abū Sa'īd's report.

It is interesting to remark that Abū Sa'īd, while refusing to dictate the Prophet's traditions to his own students, did not quote the prohibitory ḥadīth from the Prophet. He merely said: "We do not dictate and make these (ahādīth) books. The Messenger of Allāh used to narrate to us and we learnt them by heart, so, you (also) memorise from us as we used to memorise from your Prophet"<sup>2</sup> It appears from Abū Sa'īd's statement that non-recording of ḥadīth was his own personal liking and not an order of the Prophet. This is another indication of the fact that the prohibitory ḥadīth related on Abū Sa'īd's authority is unauthentic.

In the light of the above discussion we can say that it is unlikely that the Prophet had issued some strict order against writing of his sayings. The facts that he encouraged reading and writing, sent letters, issued circulars, and dictated certain laws, depict a completely reverse picture and we tend to believe that even if there was any prohibitory order in the beginning, it must have been cancelled afterwards. The reasons for aversion to ḥadīth writing, in the beginning, should, therefore, be sought not in the Prophet's ḥadīth but elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 93.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 64.; Ulūm, 20, n.; Taqyīd, 36-38.; Ilm, 8b.; Fāsil, 36a.

## 9. Reasons for aversion to writing ḥadīth:

A critical study of the prohibitive traditions of the Prophet and statements of later traditionists reveal the interesting fact that the prejudice against writing which lasted for quite a long time was not the result of the Prophet's interdiction to write down his sayings.<sup>1</sup> It was, on the other hand, based on varied factors which can be outlined as under:<sup>2</sup>

1. A fear lest the words of the Prophet be profaned and books wherein the sayings were recorded might not be treated with enough respect.<sup>3</sup>
2. A fear lest the traditions might compete with the Book of God, and be given an undue authority.<sup>4</sup>
3. Being religious literature, it was supposed to be learnt by heart after the traditional fashion of acquiring religious teaching orally.
4. Lest the writer, relying on his writing, forget to learn the content.<sup>5</sup> The Arabs who disapproved the writing of ḥadīth believed that it can be better preserved through memorisation. They were of the opinion that once the information is committed to writing, it is liable to be forgotten, for the writer being confident that he would learn it in future, never brings his

<sup>1</sup> Muir rightly considers the story of prohibition as 'untrustworthy.' (cf. Mahomet, i, p. xxxiv, n. ; Historical Sources, 114.).

<sup>2</sup> As I am summarising the factors responsible for prejudice against writing, some of the points already mentioned under 'Purpose of interdiction' will unavoidably be repeated.

<sup>3</sup> History of Persia, i, 273.; Muslim Theology, 76.; Fāsil 37a.

<sup>4</sup> Tacyīd, 49-51.; Muslim Theology, 76.; History of Persia, i, 273.

<sup>5</sup> SIH, i, 63.; Tacyīd (Intr.) 9-10.; Bayān, i, 68.; Manār, x, 758.; Tab, VI, 189.; Zunūn, i, 33.; Fāsil, 37a, 37b.; As-sunna, 308.

intention into practice. Khalīl (d. 170/175 A.H.), the poet, has represented their views in these words: "Knowledge is not what bookcase contains; knowledge is that which is contained nowhere but in the chest (Laysa bi-'ilm mā ḥawā 'l-qimṭar; mā 'l-'ilm illā mā ḥawāhū 's-ṣadr)"<sup>1</sup>.

5. Lest the holy sayings reach incompetent hands.<sup>2</sup> It was with this apprehension that a number of traditionists either burnt, effaced or buried their manuscripts or left a will asking their executors to do the same. But if they were confident that the books will reach competent hands after their death, they would not have destroyed their records. The example of Abū Qilāba (d. 104 A.H.) can be cited as an example who made the following will at his death-bed: "Despatch my books to Ayyūb (d. 131 A.H.), or otherwise burn them."<sup>3</sup>
6. Lest the people go astray like those who resorted to writing their (religious) books in early times.<sup>4</sup> This is plainly stated in the following statement of Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110 A.H.): "Beware of books, for your predecessors had gone astray due to books." Similarly, Ibn 'Awn (d. 151 A.H.) had said, "These books lead people astray."<sup>5</sup> Finally, Ibn 'Ulayya al-Baṣrī (d. 200 A.H.) told that 'the companions had disapproved of writing, for their predecessors had gone astray due to the books.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 37b.; Bayān, i, 68.; Manār, x, 758.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 61.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VII, i, 135.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, VII, i, 141.; 'Ulūm, 25, n.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 57.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 57.

7. Lest the Qur'ānic text mix up with the ḥadīth and cause confusion in reader's mind.<sup>1</sup>
8. Lest the traditions turn people's attention away from the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>
9. Proximity of the age of the Prophet<sup>3</sup>, the small number of Isnād<sup>4</sup>, less events<sup>5</sup> and less differences of opinion among the jurists<sup>6</sup>: Ḥasan b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ar-Rāmhurmuzī (d. 360 A.H. circa) mentions, inter alia, the above reasons for disapproval of writing by early Muslims. As the Prophet was easily accessible to them, the companions did not feel it absolutely essential to record his sayings in books. They could easily consult him in their day to day problems. Besides, there were other reliable authorities among the companions themselves who could be consulted in connection with the Prophet's ḥadīth<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, there were little differences among jurists on legal matters at this time. There was, therefore, 'no conscious attempt at systemisation of Islamic law at this stage'.<sup>8</sup>
10. Companions' fear to mix their own ra'y (personal opinion) with the Prophet's ḥadīth also stopped them from writing the traditions.<sup>9</sup> The younger companions and successors feared that lest their own considered opinion (ra'y) on certain legal

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<sup>1</sup> Bayān, i, 68.; ii, 121. ; Taqyīd (Intr.), 9,21.; Tacyīd, 57.

<sup>2</sup> Tacyīd, 57.; Fāsil, 37a.; Tdh, iii, 152.

<sup>3</sup> Fāsil, 37a.; Zunūn, i, 33.; Tacyīd (Intr.), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Fāsil, 37a.; Zunūn, i, 33.; Tacyīd (Intr.), 9.

<sup>5</sup> Zunūn, i, 33.

<sup>6</sup> Zunūn, i, 33.

<sup>7</sup> Zunūn, i, 33.

<sup>8</sup> Zunūn, i, 33.; Robson, "Tradition, the second foundation of Islam", Muslim world, XLI:i (January, 1951), p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Ulūm, 42.; Bayān, ii, 134-135.

matters be taken as the Prophet's ḥadīth. Hence they hesitated to record the traditions. Zayd b. Thābit, who is wrongly placed in the category of 'opponents' group, was actually in favour of writing Prophet's ḥadīth. His hesitation to write down the traditions was due to his cautious attitude lest his own opinion be mistakenly taken as Prophet's ḥadīth. This is evident from his attitude shown at the court of Marwān. When the latter made him relate aḥādīth and got it secretly written by a scribe sitting behind a curtain, Zayd requested Marwān to erase the traditions for they might contain some of his ra'y.<sup>1</sup> The same was the attitude of Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 94 A.H.) who tore off some pages (sahīfa), fearing that they might have contained his ra'y as well.<sup>2</sup>

11. Powerful retentive memory:<sup>3</sup> We have already discussed this point at great length. Suffice to say here that Arabs were in fact a basically oral race who preserved most of their information in safe depositories of heart, though writing was not unknown to them. Under these circumstances, their aversion to writing Prophet's ḥadīth is quite understandable.
12. Less scribes: Despite the fact that the art of writing was introduced in Arabia long before Islam, and the Prophet had paid special attention to its progress and development, the number of scribes were still limited. Hence the sayings of the Prophet were recorded by only a few companions who were

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, II, ii, 117.; Tacyīd (Intr.), 20.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, ii, 144.; Tacyīd (Intr.), 20.

<sup>3</sup> Manāhil, 286.; Tahdīth, 45-46.



versed in the art of writing. Thus one of the reasons why ahādīth were not recorded extensively was the scarcity of the scribes in early times.<sup>1</sup>

13. Ambiguity of Arabic Script: The fear that the text of ḥadīth may remain ambiguous is also believed to have discouraged the Arabs to record the Prophet's ḥadīth. In the words of Macdonald, "The unhappy character of the Arabic script, especially when written without diacritical points, often made it hard, if not practically impossible, to understand such short contextless texts as the traditions."<sup>2</sup> This view has, however, been challenged by Ḥamīdullah who believes that dotting was already in use during the Prophet's lifetime.<sup>3</sup>
14. 'Umar's prohibition: Another main factor responsible for non-compilation of Prophet's ḥadīth in early Islam, was the strict order of 'Umar which forbade the companions to record the sayings of the Prophet. We have seen that 'Umar, during his caliphate successfully implemented this order and in pursuance of his policy burnt some of the written collections of ḥadīth. The recording of Prophet's ḥadīth during 'Umar's lifetime was, therefore, on a very small scale.

It would not be out of place to discuss here the views of Sprenger regarding 'Umar's intention to issue an order against writing ḥadīth. He maintains that 'Umar did not want to educate the Bedouin Arabs but wished to preserve their savage bravery and religious fanaticism to make them rulers of the world. "The writing and erudition", says Sprenger,

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<sup>1</sup> Fath (Intr.), 4.; Tahdīth, 45-46.

<sup>2</sup> Muslim Theology, 76. .

<sup>3</sup> Sahīfa, 9, n.2. ..

"did not suit his purpose." He further says that 'Umar wanted to separate the Arabs from all other nations and wished that the Arabic method of preserving their doctrines be different from the Jews and Christians. Hence, in Sprenger's opinion, the Arabs were advised by 'Umar to preserve their teachings orally as against the tradition of Christians and Jews who employed writing for such purpose. Sprenger believes that it was with the above intention that 'Umar had forbidden his fellow companions to write down the Prophet's ḥadīth.<sup>1</sup>

Historically speaking, 'Umar's intention to discourage the writing of ḥadīth does not seem to be the one suggested by Sprenger. In fact his prohibition to make a standard collection of ḥadīth<sup>2</sup> was purely out of religious consideration.<sup>3</sup> His own intention to collect the sayings and actions of the Prophet in writing and invoking the help of God in putting this intention into practice<sup>4</sup>, his statements in favour of ḥadīth writing<sup>5</sup>, and his personal interest in the study and propagation of the Prophet's teachings<sup>6</sup>, all go to prove that he was not against writing as such. What can at the most be said about his policy in this regard is this that he was extremely cautious in paying due respect to the Qur'ān and to maintain its supremacy over the ḥadīth. His instruction to the group of people leaving for Iraq not to relate too many aḥādīth to the readers of the Qur'ān in that city<sup>7</sup>, shows that he was primarily

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<sup>1</sup> "Origin of writing...", JASB, XXV, 1856, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, III, i, 206.; V, 140.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, III, i, 206.; V, 140.; Papyri, i, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Ilm, 4a.; Tab, III, i, 206.

<sup>5</sup> He is reported to have said, "Preserve knowledge in books". (cf. Fāsil, 36a.; Bayān, i, 72.; Ilm, 2b.; Tacyīd, 88.; SD, i, 127.)

<sup>6</sup> SD, i, 85.; Tab, III, i, 201, 243.; Bayān, ii, 122-123.; Tacyīd, 88.

<sup>7</sup> Bayān, ii, 120-121.; Fāsil, 65b.; Tdh, i, 7.; iii, 152.

concerned with the preservation of the text of the Qur'ān and did not want the ḥadīth to be given undue authority. The fact that he forbade people from paying much attention to ḥadīth study and its transmission, presupposes the popularity of ḥadīth so much that the position of the Qur'ān was likely to have been affected.

Looking at the interest taken by 'Umar in the propagation of religious knowledge by way of appointing teachers in various cities<sup>1</sup>, it seems strange that he would have wished to deprive the Arabs of knowledge, let alone the sayings of the Prophet. On the contrary, he encouraged them to equip themselves with learning and had said, "tafaqqahū qabl an tasūdū", meaning, "Develop the faculty of comprehension before you become the leaders".<sup>2</sup> As regards his instruction with regard to writing, he is reported as saying, "Fetter knowledge into writing."<sup>3</sup>

The reason why he forbade the writing of ḥadīth was not only to keep pure the text of the Qur'ān but also due to his desire to keep all available Islamic literature unpolluted and free from legendary and unhistorical material. Confining ourselves to his interest in ḥadīth, it seems that he was worried about the rampancy of non-legal traditions concerning matters of belief and dogma - the kind of ḥadīth most likely to misunderstanding, misreporting and tempting to forgery. It was perhaps, this kind of ḥadīth whose narration, he banned. This type of emotional ḥadīth was bound to be very popular among the masses. He, therefore, got worried and prohibited the people from circulating it and thus distracting their attention from the Qur'ān.

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, III, i, 202, 243.

<sup>2</sup> SD, i, 79.; 'Ilm, 2b.

<sup>3</sup> Fāsil, 36a.; Bayān, i, 72.; 'Ilm, 2b.; Tacyid, 88.; SD, i, 127.

Although the prohibition is made in general terms, yet it seems that it referred to these non-legal ahādīth. This inference has been drawn by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr who says, "Umar's prohibition referred to those ahādīth which can neither be used for legal purposes, nor can become sunna ('ammā lā yufīd hukman wa lā yakūnu sunnatan)"<sup>1</sup>

It is significant to note that the prohibition of 'Umar refers to the narration and not to writing of ḥadīth. Besides, the prohibition is not total. He only said, "aqillū'r-riwāya", meaning 'narrate only few ḥadīth'.<sup>2</sup> The report in which the prolific narrators are said to have been detained also refer to their narration and not to writing.

It seems, therefore, that 'Umar was in favour of recording ḥadīth although he discouraged it for fear that it may distract people's attention from the study of the Qur'ān. It is also certain that his prejudice against writing was not based on the Prophet's interdiction to commit the ahādīth in writing, for had it been the case, he would have expressly mentioned so. This, also, is a valid argument for considering the reports of the Prophet's interdiction as unauthentic.

We have seen that there were several factors - other than the prohibitive ahādīth - which became responsible for prejudice against writing among early Muslims. While some men opposed writing because they considered it abominable depository of knowledge<sup>3</sup>, others held that if written, the purpose of writing would fail, for the writer,

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<sup>1</sup> Bayān, ii, 121.

<sup>2</sup> Fāsil, 65b.; Bayān, ii, 121.

<sup>3</sup> Sufyān ath-Thawrī is reported to have said, "bi'sa mustawdi' al-'ilm al-qarātīs (books are bad depositories of knowledge)". (cf. Taqyīd, 58)

after putting the contents into writing, will completely rely on the written text and shall forget its contents.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, writing was disapproved by some other scholars who feared that the written ahādīth, if reached incompetent hands will be profaned and misused. Thus we see that the 'opponents' instead of quoting prohibitive ḥadīth of the Prophet gave their own personal reasons for the disapproval of ḥadīth writing.

Whatever reasons there might have been of aversion to writing ḥadīth, it is undoubtedly true that a prejudice against such practice did exist for a considerable length of time, though some men continued writing even during this period. It appears that the prejudice lasted few decades after the reign of Umar 'I, and around third quarter of the first century A.H., writing got the upper hand. By the close of the first century and in the first quarter of the second century A.H., the writing was commonly preferred over memory; and the period of Zuhri came to be regarded as the 'age of manuscripts'.<sup>2</sup>

In fact the supremacy of writing was already acknowledged in the last decade of the first century after hijra. This can be well inferred from Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's remark who says: "Writing became extant after the death of Ḥasan (d. 110 A.H.) and Ibn al-Musayyib (d. 94 A.H.)."<sup>3</sup>

One should not, however, presume that throughout the period when oral transmission of ḥadīth was preferred, writing was forsaken. In fact, we are told of continuous written transmission of ḥadīth from earliest times onwards. Even at a time when writing was vehemently condemned, the scholars wrote down secretly.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ulūm, 78.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, ii, 184.

<sup>3</sup> Qūt, ii, 37.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE THEORY OF LATE RECORDING OF ḤADĪTH

#### 1. Bases of the theory:-

In the previous chapter we had referred to the erroneous belief that the transmission of ḥadīth remained oral for about a hundred years after the hijra and it was only at the close of the century that the traditions began to be recorded.<sup>1</sup> As the question of ḥadīth writing is a basic one, it is necessary to discuss the grounds on which this theory of late recording is based.

There are various factors which gave rise to this theory. The chief among them are as follows:

- (1) Prophet's prohibitory ahādīth.
- (2) Destruction of written records.
- (3) Misinterpretation of certain terms and statements.
- (4) Biased views about the Jāhiliyya period and the Umayyad dynasty.

We take up these points one by one.

(i) Prophet's prohibitory ahādīth:- It is generally believed that the companions and the successors refrained from writing down the traditions because of the Prophet's prohibitory order to this effect. But we have already seen that either the reports about the Prophet's interdiction to write down his traditions are unauthentic or his prohibitory ahādīth were abrogated by later permissive traditions. The Prophet's wish to write something at his death-bed provides a

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdīth, 45-46.; Fath (Intr.), i, 17.; Tdh, i, 151.; Qūt, i, 159.; Khīṭaṭ, ii, 333.; Aḍwā', 207.; Zunūn, i, 637.; Muhaddithūn, 127.; As-Sunna (Sib.), 40.; Manār, x, 768.; Taqyīd (Intr.), 7.; Fajr, 221.

convincing proof of his permission to write down traditions. Furthermore, the existence of ṣahīfas in the early Islamic period and the discovery of certain written records, go to prove the falsity of the argument that the Prophet was against writing down ḥadīth.

Over and above all, those who were against writing ḥadīth gave their own personal reasons for not recording traditions. Even 'Umar, who is claimed to have been a staunch opponent of writing, did not quote the Prophet's ḥadīth in support of his view against recording ḥadīth.

It is, therefore, wrong to hold that the prohibitory ḥadīth of the Prophet had checked the growth of written transmission of ḥadīth.

(ii) Destruction of written records: It is historically true that a bulk of ḥadīth literature was destroyed either by the owners of the manuscripts themselves or by their executors. Among those who destroyed their writings themselves may be mentioned: 'Abīda b. Qays (d. 72 A.H.)<sup>1</sup>, 'Urwa b. az-Zubayr (d. 93 A.H.)<sup>2</sup>, Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā' (d. 154/159 A.H.)<sup>3</sup>, 'Isā b. Yūnus (d. 187 A.H.)<sup>4</sup>, Abū Sulaymān ad-Dārānī<sup>5</sup>, Aḥmad b. Abī 'l-Ḥawārī<sup>6</sup>, Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd Allāh<sup>7</sup>, Abū Mūsā<sup>8</sup>, Sufyān

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 63.; SD, i, 131.; Bayān, i, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, V, 133.; "Earliest biographies...", IC, i, (1927), pp.547-548.

<sup>3</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 321.; Udabā', v, 389.

<sup>4</sup> Tacyīd, 62.

<sup>5</sup> Udabā', v, 389.

<sup>6</sup> 'Uyūn (Akh), 52.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, VI, 255.

<sup>8</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 83.



ath-Thawrī<sup>1</sup>, Dā'ūd at-Ṭī'ī (d. 165 A.H.)<sup>2</sup>, Bishr al-Ḥāfi<sup>3</sup>, Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawhīdī<sup>4</sup> and Yūsuf b. Isbāt<sup>5</sup>.

Among those who left wills to their executors either to destroy the manuscripts in the manner specified or handing them over to named persons, were the following: Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 A.H.)<sup>6</sup>, Ṭā'ūs<sup>7</sup>, 'Abīda (d. 72 A.H.)<sup>8</sup>, Shu'ba<sup>9</sup>, Abū Qilāba (d. 104/105 A.H.)<sup>10</sup>, Bishr b. al-Ḥārith<sup>11</sup>, Abī Sa'īd as-Sayrafī<sup>12</sup>, Sufyān ath-Thawrī (d. 161 A.H.)<sup>13</sup>, Ibn al-Ja'ābī (d. 355 A.H.)<sup>14</sup> and Abū Kurayb (d. 248 A.H.)<sup>15</sup>.

The destruction of this literary treasure had taken place in various ways - by burning, by burying and hiding, by erasing, washing or effacing, and by throwing into water. The practice having its origin in the time of the Companions (and according to one report in the Prophet's lifetime)<sup>16</sup> survived so late as 400 A.H. When Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawhīdī of

- 1 He is reported to have torn one thousand sheets (juz') and scattered them in the air. (cf. Udabā', v, 389.)
- 2 He was known as Ṭā' al-umma (the crown of nation.) He threw his books into the sea. (cf. Udabā', v, 389.; Ma'ārif, 271.; Papyri, ii, 62.)
- 3 Bagh, vii, 67.
- 4 Udabā', v, 386.
- 5 Udabā', v, 389.
- 6 Tab, VII, i, 127.; Ruth, "Arabic Books and Libraries in the Umayyad Period", AJSL, Lii, 249.
- 7 Tab, v, 393.; Tagyīd, 61.
- 8 Tagyīd, 62.; 'Ilm, 9b.
- 9 Tagyīd, 62.
- 10 Tagyīd, 62.; Tab, VII, i, 135.; Tdh, i, 88.; Fāsil, 51a.
- 11 Tagyīd, 62-63.
- 12 Udabā', v, 389.
- 13 Fihrist, 315.; Ma'ārif, 170.
- 14 Tdh, iii, 131.
- 15 Tdh, ii, 73.
- 16 Ṣaḥīfa, 37.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 249.

Baghdad destroyed his books, he justified the act by quoting early precedents.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note that rarely did the destroyers of manuscripts specify reasons for destroying their writings. The actions of these authors and collectors were, therefore, interpreted in various ways, and later traditionists assigned motives to suit their own views.

The adherents of the theory of late recording of ḥadīth believe that the destruction was in accordance with the policy and wish of the Prophet and his Companions who did not want to give the ḥadīth universal, everlasting and divine authority (dīn 'āmm dā'im).<sup>2</sup> On the basis of this assumption they claim that the traditions were either unwritten in the beginning, or if they were written, they had been destroyed by the collectors themselves. Hence no collection until the second century A.H.

This false supposition is based neither on facts nor on common sense. Historically speaking, the traditions were being recorded not only during the Prophet's lifetime but in later periods as well. Suffice it to refer to private records of the companions and Prophet's own favourable attitude towards writing. So far as official codification of ḥadīth is concerned, it was of course not done. But it should be kept in mind that the Qur'ān itself was codified in 'Uthmān's time. Does this fact prove that the Qur'ān was not written until 'Uthmān's caliphate? If we admit, and it is historically established, that the

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<sup>1</sup> Udabā', v, 386.; Ruth, "Arabic Books and Libraries in the Umayyad period", AJSL, Lii, 250.

<sup>2</sup> Manār, x:10, 767.; Authenticity, 51.

revelations originally used to be recorded on separate sheets and ~~was~~ were later compiled in book form, we should be prepared to believe that traditions, even though they were not officially recorded, were privately written down during the Prophet's time.

The recording of the Prophet's hadith by the companions is not surprising, for if these people could write down the poetry, the proverbs, the genealog, the wise sayings of Luqmān and others, why could not they write the sayings of their Prophet. One cannot, therefore, prove that the traditions were not written in the beginning.

As regards the practice of destroying written records by the traditionists themselves, there is no dispute about it. That 'Umar and 'Abd-Allāh b. Mas'ūd had respectively burnt<sup>1</sup> and effaced<sup>2</sup> all written material accessible to them and that the former had issued a general order to burn all available record<sup>3</sup>, is quite well known. It is also known that few other companions and successors had either themselves burnt or effaced the written records or left wills to this effect. But despite all these facts, it cannot be established that all written material of ḥadīth totally perished.

If we make an objective study of the reports regarding the destruction of manuscripts, we come to the conclusion that the actions of all the scholars were sincerely motivated. While 'Umar and

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<sup>1</sup> 'Umar is reported to have burnt the books of Ṣābiḥ b. 'Īsā, a Khārijite. (cf. Papyri, i, 20.; Mizān, ii, 276.) For reports about destroying of books in general, see Taqyid, 52.; Tab, V, 140.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 398-399.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyid, 53-56.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyid, 53.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 400.; Bayān, i, 65.

‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd destroyed written ahādīth for fear that they might compete with the Qur’ān, the later scholars did so for a variety of other sincere motives. Most of them destroyed their manuscripts in their old age for fear that after their death they might reach incompetent hands and be misused.<sup>1</sup> In fact they remained hesitant to part with their precious treasure till the end of their lives. They wanted to preserve their manuscripts on condition that they reached the competent scholars, failing which they made the painful decision to destroy them. This was done only as a last resort. The dying wish of Abū Qilāba (d. 104 A.H.) clearly explains this point. In his will in favour of his pupil, Ayyūb as-Sikhtiyānī (d. 131 A.H.), he said: "Send my books to Ayyūb, if he survived, otherwise burn them."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, ‘Abīda b. Qays (d. 72 A.H.) after destroying his books himself, he said, "I fear that it will come, after my death, in possession of someone who might interpolate the text (akhshā an yalīha ahad ba’dī fa yada‘uhā fī ghayr mawādi‘ ihī)"<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes the scholars hid their manuscripts for fear of authorities, and when that fear was gone, they took out their books.

Sufyan ath-Thawri (d. 161 A.H.) is reported to have done so.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever might have been the motives behind the destruction of writings, it is an undeniable fact that a large number of ḥadīth collections were destroyed in early Islam. But this does not mean that the practice of destroying resulted in total loss of ahādīth, as we shall see presently.

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<sup>1</sup> Tagyīd, 61.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VII, i, 135.; Tdh, i, 88.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 67.; SD, i, 131.; Tab, VI, 63.; Tagyīd, 61.

<sup>4</sup> Jarḥ (Intr.), 115.

We are told that the majority of the scholars destroyed their manuscripts at their old age. It shows that sufficient time was at their disposal to transmit their knowledge of ḥadīth to their pupils. Some of these students must in all probability have incorporated the contents of teacher's manuscripts in their own books. It is also possible that they made a separate copy of their teacher's manuscript and preserved it with them. In this way, even if the teachers destroyed their manuscripts, its contents remained preserved with their students.

Some of the manuscripts are reported to have been accidentally discovered and saved, as was the case with Ṭabarī's Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā', which was found buried after his death.<sup>1</sup> Few other collections of written ḥadīth were preserved by pupils or relatives of such writers who had allowed writing for memorisation purposes. The examples of Sa'īd b. Jubayr (d. 94/95 A.H.) and 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd can be cited in this connection. The former kept the writing of his teacher, Ibn 'Umar<sup>2</sup>, while the latter is reported to have preserved the book of his father, 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 32 A.H.)<sup>3</sup>.

Thus we see that even when the manuscripts were destroyed or when it was desired that their contents should remain unwritten, they were somehow preserved in writing. It is, therefore, wrong to maintain that late recording of ḥadīth was due to destruction - and thus non-availability of written ḥadīth.

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 62, referring Ṭabarī's Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā', ed. Friedrich Kern, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 44.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 72.

(iii) Misinterpretation of certain terms and statements:

The theory of late recording of ḥadīth is also based on misconception of certain words used in connection with writing of traditions. These words include both substantives, that indicate tools and materials of writing, as well as verbals, which show the process and manner of recording traditions. To the former may be mentioned Ṣaḥīfa, Nuskha, Daftar, Lawḥ, Risāla or Kitāb, (with their plurals), while the latter include verbs like ṣamʿ, ʿard, akhbara, haddatha, jamaʿa, dawwana and their derivatives. The above words, some of which borrowed from other languages, convey different senses in different contexts. If they were to be translated as conveying only one meaning consistently, they would lead to confusion and misunderstanding. Take, for instance, the word 'ṣaḥīfa'. It is ordinarily translated as 'sheet of writing material' but the early Islamic literature does not always use it in this strict sense; it is employed for a letter, booklet or book as well. Thus to translate the word in any of these senses consistently would be wrong and misleading.

Beginning with the word ṣaḥīfa referred to above, we take up some of these terms and discuss their meanings in order to show that the theory of late recording of ḥadīth is based on their misunderstanding and misinterpretation:

(a) Ṣaḥīfa and Mushaf:-

The word ṣaḥīfa, pl. ṣuḥuf (lit. sheet, roll or book) was known to Arabs even before Islam.<sup>1</sup> The post-Islamic literature also uses it quite frequently. Apart from the Qur'ānic reference of Ṣuḥuf Ibrāhīm wa Mūsā (87:18-19)<sup>2</sup>, the Ṣaḥīfas of the companions are mentioned in

<sup>1</sup> Shiʿr, i, 152.; Maṣādir, 70, 71, 133.

<sup>2</sup> The word in plural (ṣuḥuf) occurs at eight places in the Qur'ān (cf. Qur'ān, 20:133; 53:36; 74:52; 80:13; 81:10; 87:18; 87:19 and 98:2).

ḥadīth collections and some of them have been recently discovered.

The word also occurs in historical and biographical works.<sup>1</sup>

It is generally believed that the word ṣaḥīfa implied a single sheet of writing material used in early Islamic period. But considering the nature and contents of post-Islamic ṣaḥīfas one comes to the conclusion that it cannot be the only meaning in which the word was used. It appears that the word was also employed for quite sizeable collections. It referred not only to a single sheet of writing material but also to a memorandum, a note-book and even a book size manuscript.

That ṣaḥīfa meant more than a few sheets of writing material is evident from reports saying that the Ṣaḥīfa of Hammām b. Munabbih, and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ contained 138<sup>2</sup> and 1000<sup>3</sup> ahādīth respectively. If these reports are correct - as they are, at least in the former case - then it is highly improbable, rather impossible in the latter case, that such a large number of traditions could have been written on a single sheet. Similarly, the ṣaḥīfas of Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh<sup>4</sup>, Sulaymān b. Qays al Yashkurī<sup>5</sup>, Ibn 'Umar<sup>6</sup>, the ṣaḥīfa in possession of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī<sup>7</sup>, 'Ibn Abbās<sup>8</sup>, Ḥujr b. 'Adī<sup>9</sup> and Ṣaḥīfa Yarmūkiya

<sup>1</sup> Annales, passim.; Sīra, passim.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, i, 316.; Ṣaḥīfa (Ar.), 29-47.

<sup>3</sup> Usd, iii, 233-34.; As-sunna, 349-350.; Papyri, ii, 58.; Mabāhith, 218.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, V, 344.; Tahdh, iv, 215.; Mst, ii, 10/23.; Jāmi', vi, 52 (Buyū'); Ṣaḥīfa, 27.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdh, iv, 215.; Ṣaḥīfa, 27.; Jāmi', vi, 52 (Buyū').

<sup>6</sup> Kifāya, 329.; Taqyīd, 103, n.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, VII, ii, 116.; SD, i, 121.; Bayān, i, 74-75.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, x, 413.; Tab, II, ii, 123.; V, 216.

<sup>9</sup> Tab, VI, 154.



of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ<sup>1</sup>, were not as small as their contents could be preserved in one single sheet.

Thus to translate the word ṣahīfa as a single sheet of writing material would be wrong. Even 'Alī's ṣahīfa, which contained rules about liberating of prisoners, damages for torts to persons, the ages of the camels for purposes of tax, and other legal matters,<sup>2</sup> could not have been written on one single sheet. Furthermore, the entire Tafsīr of Sa'īd b. Jubayr<sup>3</sup> and a collection of 300 traditions of Zuhri<sup>4</sup>, both known as ṣahīfa, were large enough to cover more than a single parchment of writing material.

That ṣahīfa meant more than one single sheet can be deduced from other reports where it has been used in connection with the Qur'ān. It is reported, for instance, that ṣahīfas of the caliph Abū Bakr and of Fāṭima, the sister of 'Umar I, contained chapters nine and twenty of the Qur'ān, respectively.<sup>5</sup> Looking at the size of these chapters one can easily infer that the ṣahīfas concerned must have consisted of dozens of pages and could not have contained above Qur'ānic texts on a single sheet. Similarly, Ḥafṣa's copy of the Qur'ān, which contained large portions of the Qur'ānic text, if not the whole of it, was also known as ṣahīfa<sup>6</sup> - a fact which clearly shows that ṣahīfa (lit. a sheet) referred to several sheets of written material and not one single sheet.

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<sup>1</sup> Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 71.; Taqyīd, 88-89.; Sunna (Sib.), 74.; Ashrāf, i, 525.; Musnad (T), 15.; Musnad (Shaf), ii, 104 (Ḍiyāt).; Umm, vi, 3; vii, 292.

<sup>3</sup> Jarḥ, III, i, 332.

<sup>4</sup> Bagh, xiv, 87.

<sup>5</sup> Papyri, ii, 57-58.; Sīra, i, 226.; Ṭab, VIII, 56.; Ḥilya, ii, 50-51.; SB, iii, 393 (Fadā'il al Qur'ān).

<sup>6</sup> Ḥilya, ii, 51.; Fath, ix, 9-19.; SB, iii, 393 (Fadā'il al-Qur'ān).

In fact, the word sahīfa, used in connection with ḥadīth, indicated the traditionist's collection of ḥadīth, both small and large. Although some ḥadīth collections in the companions' time must have been small, it is most likely that the collections of others were large, as, for instance, the sahīfa of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Ās, who is reported to have written everything that he heard from the Prophet despite protests from his fellow companions. The report that he had collected 1000 ahādīth suggests that he possessed a sizeable sahīfa which can easily be called a book. We are also told about the approximate or probable size of the sahīfas of Khālīd b. Ma'dān, Khālīd b. Abī 'Imrān, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Waḥb b. Munabbih, Ḥumayd at-Ṭawīl and of Zuhri.<sup>1</sup> After reading about the size of these sahīfas, one can easily infer that the term referred to 'book-size manuscript' in the early Islamic period.

It seems that the average size of a sahīfa was taken for granted in those days, for the sources, with the exception of a few, only incidentally refer to the exact size of these collections of ahādīth. It seems, however, that in the second half of the first century, the size of the sahīfa was larger than those of earlier times, for now the companions had started copying the collections of other fellow-companions and had undertaken long journeys for this purpose. Furthermore, they, at this time, were eager to copy the manuscripts in full ('alā 'l-wajh), making thereby sizeable larger collections of ḥadīth.

The riḥla (travel) and system of Isnād played an important part in the development of written transmission of ḥadīth. The traditionists

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, i, 22.; ii, 58.

travelled far and wide not only to know unknown ahādīth, but also to ascertain the authenticity of traditions. The outcome of their long, arduous journeys were put to writing and preserved in ṣahīfas. Not only this; they also chained down their traditions with the names of reporters. As a result of this, the size of their collections of ḥadīth became larger and larger. It is interesting to note that these large collections were known by the same term, ṣahīfa, which was also employed for short memoranda, written on a single or a few sheets.

Thus we can say that ṣahīfa in early Islam was employed for a 'book' and not for memoranda only, as is generally believed.<sup>1</sup> The supposition that early ḥadīth collections were just memoranda and not books can be refuted on the ground that there existed in early times a practice of taking rough notes and later transferring the rough drafts into permanent records, known as kutub and ṣahīfa.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that companions and successors used to preserve traditions both for memorisation and for permanent record. Although we find several reports saying that a particular person or a group of people, say the generation of companions or successors, kept written records for the purpose of memorisation, we do not come across reports which specifically mention the second motive of writing viz the preservation for posterity. This motive can only be deduced from statements and practices of the traditionists. We have been told about 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ's large ṣahīfa which must have been for future generation. The same 'Abd Allāh has told us about other companions' practice of recording

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<sup>1</sup> Mst, ii, 196/182.; "Von Kremer's edition...", JASB, 1856, p. 203.; Mishkāt, i, (Intr.), p. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, ix, 97.; Taqyīd, 112.

the Prophet's traditions.<sup>1</sup> The stories about the destruction of records by 'Umar and others also shows that the destroyed materials were actually kept for permanent record.

That some scholars possessed permanent records for posterity is clearly indicated in the following anecdote:

Ibn Mas'ūd once related a ḥadīth whereupon his son, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān said: "you have not narrated the hadith correctly". The father then asked: "What makes you say so?" The son replied: "This is written with me." The father thereupon ordered him to bring the roll (sahīfa), and when it was brought to him, he effaced it.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the scholars had destroyed their manuscripts at their old age also shows that although they had intended to keep the record for posterity, yet finding no reliable and competent persons to look after the manuscripts, they burnt, buried and effaced their precious treasures.

We are told that the companions in those days not only learnt the aḥādīth by heart and made rough notes for memorisation, but also transferred these traditions into permanent records. Some of them even dictated the aḥādīth to their pupils from these written records. To take for example, whereas Abū Hurayra used to learn the traditions

<sup>1</sup> Bayān, i, 74.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 247.; Taqyīd, 98.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 39.

by heart<sup>1</sup>, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ and others wrote them in sahīfas for memorisation and for permanent record.<sup>2</sup> Wāthila b. al-Asqa' (d. 83 A.H.), on the other hand, dictated these traditions to his pupils, who kept them in writing.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the traditionists like Ḥammād b. Salama (d. 167 A.H.), A'mash, and Ibn Idrīs, first memorised the traditions after hearing from their teachers and then, on returning home, wrote them down.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Idrīs described the practice in these words: "I did not write the traditions (during the lectures) of A'mash, Ḥaṣīn and Layth. Instead, I used to preserve them into my memory, and then, on returning home, committed them into writing."<sup>5</sup> Ibn Idrīs advised his sons also to follow the same practice in recording the traditions.<sup>6</sup>

It appears from another report that the recording of ḥadīth was quite common among few companions, especially the academicians. Relating a story from his younger days, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ tells us that once when some companions narrated a number of traditions from the Prophet orally, he was surprised over their power of memory.

<sup>1</sup> Tab., IV, ii, 54.; Ḥadīth lit., 28.; Taqyīd, 82-84.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 81, 82, 112.; Musnad (Sh), x, 20-22.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 259.

<sup>3</sup> Imlā', 13.; Taqyīd, 99, n.; Mizān, iv, 145, no. 8658.

<sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 112.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 112, n.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 112.

So he asked how could they manage to learn the traditions by heart and reproduce them verbally. "Thereupon", tells 'Abd Allāh, "they laughed and said, 'O son of our sister'<sup>1</sup>, all that we have heard from him (i.e. the Prophet), is preserved with us in writing (inna kulla mā sami'nāhu minhu huwa 'indanā fī kitāb.)".<sup>2</sup>

In view of the prevalence of this practice, the ḥadīth collections were made by the companions, and later, by successors. These collections were known both as kitāb and ṣaḥīfa. So far as the first term is concerned, we shall discuss it in the chapter entitled 'Early records'.<sup>3</sup> At the moment, we are concerned only with the second term namely ṣaḥīfa. Given below are a few examples to show that this term was used in the sense of 'book'.

(i) In a report it is said that the writings of Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68 A.H.) which formed a camel's load<sup>4</sup>, was preserved by his slave student Kurayb, who later entrusted them to Mūsā b. 'Uqba. Whenever 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh, the grandson of Ibn 'Abbās, needed a book (al-kitāb), he wrote to Kurayb asking him to send such and such a book (ṣaḥīfa) which the latter copied and sent to the former.<sup>5</sup>

We can very well see that the words ṣaḥīfa and kitāb in the above report have been synonymously used to mean 'a book'.

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<sup>1</sup> According to other version, 'son of our brother'. (cf. Fāsil, 36a).

<sup>2</sup> Tagyīd, 98.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 247.; Fāsil, 36a.

<sup>3</sup> See infra, Chapter V, pp. 268-280.

<sup>4</sup> Equal to about six hundred weights. (cf. JASB, XXV, 1856, p. 325).

<sup>5</sup> Shadh, i, 114.; Ṭab, V, 216.; Tagyīd, 136.

(ii) In a discussion regarding various modes of taking traditions (taḥammul al-ḥadīth), Ibn Jurayj incidentally refers to the term ṣaḥīfa by which he means 'a book'. In reply to a question with regard to reading ḥadīth to the teacher, technically known as 'al-qirā'at', he remarks, "There is a difference of opinion among scholars about narrating traditions from a ṣaḥīfa and using the expression 'uḥaddithu' (I narrate orally)"<sup>1</sup>

(iii) In another report, the same Ibn Jurayj uses the word ṣaḥīfa for one of Hishām b. 'Urwa's book. The term occurs in connection with a discussion regarding transmitting ḥadīth from the book of a teacher who had not given his pupils the licence (ijāza) to relate from his book. Wāqidī reports that Ibn Jurayj once approached Hishām b. 'Urwa and asked, "Does the ṣaḥīfa which you have given to such and such person contain your ḥadīth? Hishām said, 'Yes'. "Subsequently" says Wāqidī, "I heard Ibn Jurayj saying 'I have been informed by Hishām (ḥaddathānā Hishām)'."<sup>2</sup>

This report which shows that Ibn Jurayj had read Hishām's book and narrated its contents on the latter's authority without having obtained his permission to do so, incidentally uses the word ṣaḥīfa in the sense of 'book'. In view of Hishām's reputation as having written a number of books, it can be safely said that ṣaḥīfa mentioned in the report, refers to one of his books and not only a memorandum.

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, V, 361.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, V, 362.; Jāmi', xiii, 328 ('Ilal).; Ma'ārif, 167.



From frequent mention of well-known ṣaḥīfas of the companions and also of few more mentioned above, it appears that ṣaḥīfa in early Islam meant book-size manuscript. But references are also found where ṣaḥīfa indicated just a note book and a memorandum. It seems that the term was used for both 'memoranda' and 'books'. We find several reports which allow both these interpretations. Here are some examples:

- (i) Ḥujr b. 'Adī's servant once informed his master that the latter's son did not perform ablution after coming from the toilet (enquiring indirectly, the rules regarding purity). In order to quote the Prophet's ḥadīth on this issue he said to his servant, "Fetch me the ṣaḥīfa from the garret-window (al-kūwwa)" The servant brought the manuscript wherfrom he read out a ḥadīth related on the authority of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.<sup>1</sup> Although the word ṣaḥīfa in this report could refer to a note-book only, for Ḥujr is said to have related ahādīth only from 'Alī<sup>2</sup> and could have possessed only a small collection of his traditions, there is also a possibility that he had written such a large number of traditions from 'Alī that it might have formed a book-size manuscript. The word, therefore, can be translated both as 'epistle' and 'a book'.
- (ii) It is reported that 'Alqama (d. 70 circa) brought a ṣaḥīfa to 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd and said, 'O Abū 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, have a look at this ṣaḥīfa; it contains excellent traditions (inna fīhā ahādīth ḥisānan)'. Ibn Mas'ūd, who was against writing, took the manuscript from him and effaced it, advising 'Alqama to concentrate on the Qur'ān instead of indulging in non-Qur'ānic material.<sup>3</sup> The word ṣaḥīfa, occurring in this report also allows two probable

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 154.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VI, 154.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 54.

interpretations - the book or memorandum.

- (iii) In another report Aswad (d. 74/75) and 'Alqama are said to have found [not written] a manuscript (sahīfa), which they brought to 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd, who in turn effaced it.<sup>1</sup> The term sahīfa used here can also be translated as 'book' as well as 'a memorandum'.
- (iv) Ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have washed away another document (sahīfa) which contained Abū 'd-Dardā's sayings and stories (kalām min kalām Abī 'd-Dardā' wa qisās min qisāsihī).<sup>2</sup> Apparently this sahīfa was a small monograph containing Abū 'd-Dardā's sayings but in view of his literary activities, it could have been a large collection of ahādīth. Besides, the report says that the said sahīfa not only contained some of the sayings of Abū 'd-Dardā' but also some of his stories. So much subject matter could have covered a space of few or large number of sheets and hence the document (sahīfa) can be interpreted both as 'memorandum' and 'a book'.
- (v) One more sahīfa destroyed by Ibn Mas'ūd can be interpreted both as 'book' or 'an epistle'. Sulaym b. Aswad reports that he and 'Abd Allāh b. Mirdās saw a sahīfa in possession of a man of Nukha' tribe. The sahīfa, according to report, contained stories and passages from the Qur'ān.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Mas'ūd, who described its contents as 'mischievous, misleading and heretical' (fitna wa dalāla wa bid'a) destroyed the document.<sup>4</sup>

After reading about the contents of this sahīfa one can infer

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<sup>1</sup> Tagyīd, 54.; Bayān, i, 66.

<sup>2</sup> Tagyīd, 54.

<sup>3</sup> Tagyīd, 55-56.

<sup>4</sup> Tagyīd, 55.

that it was a volume of the size of a book though the possibility of its being a booklet is also very high. But the inference that it was of the size of a book can be drawn from the statement of Ibn Mirdās who says, "I bought some sheets after paying some money."<sup>1</sup> It seems that this was a sizeable book written on loose sheets after the fashion of the day, and Ibn Mirdās had bought the sheets in which he was interested.

In view of the examples quoted above, we can conclude that the term sahīfa cannot be taken to mean only 'memorandum'. This, in fact, is only one of the senses in which the word was used in early Islam. Literally, it meant a single sheet of writing material and denoted therefore 'a letter'. It was also employed for several sheets of written material and meant, therefore, 'a contract', 'a treatise', 'a note-book' or 'a memorandum'. Lastly, but not infrequently, it was used in the sense of a book-size manuscript. That sahīfa meant 'a book' is clearly evident from a chapter heading of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's Jāmi' Bayān al-'ilm which reads 'Chapter on aversion to writing ḥadīth and its preservation in books' (bāb karāhiyat kitābat<sup>2</sup> al-'ilm wa takhlīduhū fī ṣ-s-suhuf)<sup>3</sup>.

It is interesting to note that the sahīfas in earlier times were rolled together and kept in various containers like ḡirāb (leather bag),

<sup>1</sup> "Origin of writing", JASB xxv, 1856, p. 312.; Taqyīd, 55, with a variant reading of ishtarā (he bought) instead of ishtaraytu (I bought).

<sup>2</sup> Variant 'kitāb' (without ta), but in the same sense of 'writing'.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 63.

hibāb (large jar) and jawālīq (sack)<sup>1</sup>, etc. A list of these containers can be prepared from sporadic references in available ḥadīth literature. Nabia Abbott has mentioned more than two dozens such containers in Arabic alphabetical order without giving their English equivalents.<sup>2</sup>

It is also to be noted that sahīfas were not in bound form and thus could be easily distributed by teachers among their students for reading and copying purposes. Even the manuscripts of the Qur'ān were kept in loose sheets in the beginning. Some of the early converts possessed only a few of them. We read in the story of 'Umar's conversion to Islam<sup>3</sup> that his sister Fāṭima and her husband Sa'īd were listening to the 20th chapter of the Qur'ān when 'Umar called at their house. The story tells that the manuscript was being recited by the slave Khubāb. It is mentioned in this story that 'Umar wanted to see the sahīfa they had been reading which was given to him after he had washed himself. Consequently he was converted to Islam.

<sup>1</sup> The practice seems to have continued till the reign of Maṣṣūr. "Early in the reign of Maṣṣūr", quotes Abbott, "Khālīd al-Barmakī introduced the daftar in codex form, as against the earlier rolls, for use in the administrative bureaux." (cf. Papyri, ii, 59-60, n., citing Tha'ālībī, Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and Ḥasan Kāmil aṣ-ṣayrafī, (Cairo, 1379/1960), p. 20.)

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, ii, 43, n. The main containers collected at random from available ḥadīth works are as under: Tābūt (chest or box); Tillīs (Palm-leaves basket, port-folio); Jirāb (Provision bag, A sword case); Idbāra (Bundle); Jawālīq (A sack, having two corresponding receptacles, the mouths whereof are closed by means of loops which are inserted one into another); Hubb, Hibab (Large jar); Ḥaqība (Saddle bag); Huzma (Bundle); Khurj (Saddle bag); Kharīṭa (A pouch, leathered bag); Dastja (Bundle); Rizma (Bundle), Zibl (Provision bag); Safaṭ (A casket, chest, sack); Sundūq (Chest, coffer, trunk); Sufn (Leathern vessel, Shepherd's bag); Sinnāra (A bundle of the size of a spindle); Dimāma (Two boards of the book that embrace it between them); Tibq (A vessel); Idl (Bundle, Bag, Sack); Quffa (Palm-leaves basket); Qatifa (A villous, wrapping garment); Qimṭar (Book-case); Qawsara (Basket); Kis (Purse); Midāra (Earthern jar); Namat (Saddle cloth); Huqa (Casket).

<sup>3</sup> Nihāya, xvi, 253-258.; Sīra, 224-227.

From above report it appears that some of the portions of the Qur'ān in the Prophet's time which were written on various sheets of writing material - leather, palm leaves, shoulder blades etc., were in possession of the converts.

It should not be inferred from the above story that the ṣaḥīfa mentioned here indicated a single sheet of writing material, for it is said that the manuscript contained 20th Chapter which could not possibly be written on one single sheet. The only inference that can be drawn is that ṣaḥīfa referred to unbound, loose sheets of writing material wherein Qur'ānic verses were written.

Now, if the Qur'ānic manuscripts were not bound in book form, the aḥādīth were more likely to have been kept in loose sheets, technically known as ṣuḥuf, the plural of ṣaḥīfa. "It was from these authentic, unarranged loose sheets", says Ibn Taghrī Bardī, "that the companions used to transmit the knowledge i.e. ḥadīth (kānū yarwūn 'l-ilm'an ṣuḥuf ṣaḥīḥa ghayr murattaba)".<sup>1</sup>

We have seen that ṣaḥīfa, pl. ṣuḥuf, in early Islam meant a collection of several loose sheets in which Qur'ān and ḥadīth were written down.

This does not exclude the possibility of ṣaḥīfa being used in its strict literal sense of single sheet of writing material. To take for example, the document proclaiming a boycott of the Prophet and his adherents is described in the sources as ṣaḥīfa.<sup>2</sup> Looking at the contents

<sup>1</sup> Mujūz, i, 351.; Kul'fā', 101.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 230.; Tab., I, i, 138.

of this document, we can guess that a single sheet of writing material would have been sufficient to write its subject matter. Thus it appears that the word ṣahīfa denoted a single piece of writing material. It is evident from another report found in Sīra which says that 'Umar wrote a certain verse of the Qur'ān<sup>1</sup> on a ṣahīfa and sent it to Hishām b. al-ʿĀṣ<sup>2</sup>. Here too, the content - one single verse - seems to have covered a space of not more than a sheet for which ṣahīfa was used. Ibn Sa'd also mentions a ṣahīfa which contained just one ḥadīth.<sup>3</sup> This ṣahīfa obviously consisted of a single parchment and not a book.

That ṣahīfa meant a single sheet of writing material is clear from the following report: One day on 'Alī's exhortation to write down traditions, al-Ḥārith al-A'war bought a few sheets (ṣuhuf) of writing material on which 'Alī wrote a number of ḥadīth.<sup>4</sup> In this report, the use of the word ṣuhuf in plural and mention of 'many traditions' ('ilman kathīra) indicate that few loose sheets were bought to record the sayings related by 'Alī. Hence the meaning of ṣahīfa 'a loose sheet'.

On account of its inherent meaning as 'a single sheet' of writing material, 'ṣahīfa was often used for 'letter' which normally covered the space of a page or so. To cite a few examples, Ḥaṭīb's letter containing secret information about the Prophet's intention to attack Mecca,

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<sup>1</sup> The verse reads as under: 'And follow the better (guidance) of that which is revealed unto you from your Lord before the doom cometh on you suddenly when ye know not.' Qur'ān, 39:55.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 320.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, V, 177. The text of the ḥadīth was the following: 'May he who introduces new things or harbours an innovator be cursed by Allāh, His angels and all men.'

<sup>4</sup> Tab, VI, 116.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 423.

which was despatched secretly through a Medinite woman to Meccans and was intercepted by 'Alī and Zubayr, is described in the sources as ṣahīfa<sup>1</sup>. We are told that the letter was hidden in the locks of the messenger which was discovered after a long search. It shows that the contents of the information (intelligence) was brief and had covered the space of not more than a single sheet which could have been easily hidden in the woman's hairs. Hence the appellation 'ṣahīfa'.

Bukhārī quotes a ḥadīth in which the word ṣahīfa occurs to denote 'a letter'. Referring to an ancient story, the Prophet is reported to have remarked that a man accidentally picked up a log from the sea and found therein some money with a ṣahīfa (covering letter)<sup>2</sup>. The appellation of the term to such a document was perhaps on account of the brevity of its content which could have covered a space of not more than a page.

Jāḥiẓ quotes a couplet from the poet Abū Najza (d. 130 A.H.) with the remark, "He (the poet) said (these words) with reference to a ṣahīfa (letter) which had entitled him to receive sixty wasq<sup>3</sup> (of dates)"<sup>4</sup>

The letters, given by 'Amr b. Hind to Mutalammis and Tarafa, are also described as ṣahīfa.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SB, iii, 137 (Maghāzī).; Magh, 407.

<sup>2</sup> SB, ii, 94. (Lucta)

<sup>3</sup> A measure for grain, equal to sixty sā'; Camel's load.

<sup>4</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 96.

<sup>5</sup> Shi'r, i, 133-34.; Agh (Rudolph), xxi, 194-197. For details of the story, see Supra, Chapter, III, p. 132.



The term ṣaḥīfa also occurs in 'Ḥadīth al-rīṭās' - the report regarding the Prophet's wish to record something at his death bed. Looking at these reports one gets the idea that the word ṣaḥīfa on this occasion was used in the sense of a single sheet of writing material.

The variant reports, in this connection, mention two alternative words - ṣaḥīfa and katf - as used by the Prophet on this occasion. In most versions, he is reported to have asked for an ink-pot and a ṣaḥīfa<sup>1</sup>, but in one report the ink-pot is said to have been demanded along with katf<sup>2</sup> (shoulder blade - a commonly used writing material). This second report comes from Ibn 'Abbās, who also joins the majority of transmitters giving the first version viz Prophet's demanding an ink-pot and a ṣaḥīfa. The substitution of the word ṣaḥīfa by katf in the second report, suggests that either alternative word could have been used by the Prophet. Even if the katf was asked for - though ṣaḥīfa has generally been mentioned - it shows that a single writing material was demanded by the Prophet. This, in turn, proves that the ṣaḥīfa, asked for by the Prophet at his death-bed along with an ink-pot, referred to a single sheet of writing material. Had it not been the case, Ibn 'Abbās would not have given its alternate term katf in singular.

One other version of Ibn 'Abbās, saying that the Prophet wished to dictate three injunctions<sup>3</sup>, two of which were remembered by Ibn 'Abbās, also suggests that writing on the ṣaḥīfa was going to be brief and required a single sheet of writing material. Hence the word ṣaḥīfa used on this occasion most probably meant a single sheet of writing material.

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<sup>1</sup>Tab, II, ii, 36-38. .

<sup>2</sup>Tab, II, ii, 37. ..

<sup>3</sup>Tab, II, ii, 36. ..

We have seen that ṣahīfa in certain contexts referred to a single sheet of writing material. But this is only one meaning of the term. The word also applied for more than one sheet. A host of early written records like official circular letters, contracts, and treaties, which must in all probability covered a space of at least two or more pages but not reaching the size of a note-book or book size manuscripts, are referred to in the sources as ṣahīfas.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the treaty of Ḥudaybiya, which must have covered the space of two or three sheets, is mentioned as ṣahīfa (in singular).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, several tax directives of the Prophet<sup>3</sup>, pacts<sup>4</sup>, and charters given to neighbouring tribes of Medina<sup>5</sup>, which were all likely to have been written on a couple of sheets are known as ṣahīfa.

The constitution of Medina, one of the most important written documents of the Prophet's time, has also been described as ṣahīfa.<sup>6</sup> The word ṣahīfa used here clearly indicates that like other treatises and pacts, it also referred to documents covering a space of a few pages.

Ṣahīfa also referred to a small note book used for temporary recording of ḥadīth. It seems that these note books were kept by students for taking down notes from their teachers. From these rough notes, the students made fair copies afterwards. We find several reports saying that the pupils recorded traditions of their master on note books (ṣahīfa) and when this was full, they wrote down on their

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<sup>1</sup> Sīra, i, 342-344, 749.; Magh, 388.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, ii, 749.; Magh, 388.

<sup>3</sup> Magh, 424.

<sup>4</sup> Magh, 424.

<sup>5</sup> Magh, 424.

<sup>6</sup> Sīra, 342-44. ..

palms and on their boots. On returning home they transferred all this written material in proper note books. Sa'īd b. Jubayr, for instance, relates, "Often when I called on Ibn 'Abbās (to attend his lecture), I wrote in my note book (fi saḥīfatī) until I exhaust it, then I wrote on my sandal, and when that also had no empty space, I wrote down on my palm."<sup>1</sup> In another report, Ibn Jubayr says, "I used to write down from Ibn 'Umar controversial matters with a view to discuss it with him (later). But if he had known that I possessed the note book (in which I had noted down those points), our friendship would have come to an end."<sup>2</sup>

It is said that Zuhri carried slates (alwāḥ) and note books (suhuf) during the lectures of ḥadīth.<sup>3</sup> These writing materials were, perhaps, used for rough note taking and a fair copy must have been made out of these notes only on returning home.

The practice of transferring rough drafts to proper books continued for long. We are told, for instance, that Kaysān (d. after 140 A.H.) used to write ahādīth on alwāḥ (slates) and later transferred them into daftar - another term used for book.<sup>4</sup> Again, it is said that the manuscript of Daraquṭnī's 'Ilal al-ḥadīth' was first written on ruḡa' (loose [rough] papers) and then transferred to ajzā' (loose [fair] papers).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 179.; Ṣaḥīfa, 35.; SD, i, 128.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VI, 179.; Taḥyīq, 44.; Bayān, i, 66.

<sup>3</sup> Tah, i, 109.; Dūrī, "Al-Zuhri, a study on the beginnings of History writing in Islam", BSOAS, XIX, i, (1957), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Imlā', 92.

<sup>5</sup> Bagh, xii, 37-38.

It appears from foregoing discussion that the word ṣaḥīfa has been used in different senses on different occasions. While sometimes it referred to a single sheet of writing material, on other occasions it indicated several such sheets, and not infrequently does it mean a book size manuscript. The word, therefore, can be translated as 'letter', 'a note book' or 'a book' - depending on the context.

Akin to the term ṣaḥīfa is muṣḥaf, which is often used to indicate the Qur'ān.<sup>1</sup> Literally, it means a collection of few sheets or parchments, but it also refers to a booksize manuscript. Thus the ḥadīth collection of Khālīd b. Ma'dan al-Ḥimṣī (d. 103/104 A.H.), for instance, is known as muṣḥaf.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, al-A'raj's collection of ḥadīth works have been described as maṣāḥif,<sup>3</sup> the plural of muṣḥaf. Jāḥiẓ calls each volume of Kitāb al-Ḥayawān as muṣḥaf.<sup>4</sup>

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, the main figure of prohibitory traditions, is also reported to have used this word in the sense of book. On Abū Nadra's and his colleague's request to dictate the traditions for them, Abū Sa'īd had said, "we will not dictate them to you and will not put them in book form (wa lā naj'alhā maṣāḥif). The Prophet used to relate to us and we learnt them by heart. You should also, therefore, memorise them from us as we used to do from your Prophet."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> So long as the Qur'ān remained uncompiled, it was known as 'kitāb' - a term used for it in the Qur'ān itself. (cf. Qur'ān, 2:1; 2:185; 6:19; 10:1; 16:89 et passim). After its compilation, it began to be called muṣḥaf. Abū Bakr is said to be the first who named it thus. (cf. Khulafā', 77.).

<sup>2</sup> Tdh, i, 93.; Manār, x:10, 754.; Tahdh, iii, 119.

<sup>3</sup> Tacyīd, 59.

<sup>4</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 389.; ii, 375.; iii, 539.; iv, 492.

<sup>5</sup> Tacyīd, 36.; Bayān, i, 64.

The advocates of the theory of late recording of ḥadīth have overlooked the fact that the terms ṣaḥīfa and mushaf were used in different senses in different contexts. They have translated these words in one particular sense viz a memorandum or note book consistently. On the basis of this interpretation, they reached the conclusion that no large collection of ḥadīth was made in the beginning.

It is interesting to remark that other similar terms<sup>1</sup> like daftar, nuskha, dīwan, kurrāsa, and even kitāb which were employed for both monographs and books, were interpreted by these scholars in the former sense. In this way, these terms also experienced the same fate as that of ṣaḥīfa and mushaf and were likewise interpreted in a diminutive sense.

(b) Tahdīth, Tadwīn, Jam' and Riwāya etc.:-

Apart from the misinterpretation of the terms ṣaḥīfa, daftar etc., the advocates of the theory of late recording of ḥadīth have misunderstood the verbs jama'a, rawā, dhakara, dawwana, sannafa, and their derivatives. This, in turn, has led them to believe that the transmission of ḥadīth has all along been oral until so late as in the second century after the hijra. One such scholar, Mingana, has gone so far as to maintain that the first written record of ḥadīth was made by the compilers of the classical collections in the third century A.H.<sup>2</sup> This far fetched conclusion seems based on his assumption that the verbs rawā and ḥaddatha meant only oral transmission. In his own words, "Neither expression has ever referred to a written document lying before the narrator."<sup>3</sup> In fact, Mingana and his supporters have

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<sup>1</sup> See Infra, Chapter V, dealing with actual written records of ḥadīth.

<sup>2</sup> Mingana, An important manuscript of the traditions of Bukhari, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Mingana, An important manuscript of the traditions of Bukhari, p. 21.

misunderstood the meaning of these terms and have thus reached a wrong conclusion.

We have already seen that the nouns sahīfa, daftar, nuskha and other similar basic terms, employed in connection with writing and preservation of ḥadīth, were used in various senses like 'letter', 'memorandum' and 'book'. We have also noticed that the protagonists of the theory of late recording overlooked this meaning of the term and took it only in the sense of a memorandum or a note book. It is interesting to note that the story of verbs and their derivatives, used in connection with recording of ḥadīth, is more or less the same. The verbs (and consequently their derivatives) which have been commonly misinterpreted are: tahdīth and ikhbār, jam' and riwāya, tadwīn and tasnīf, dhikr and qawl and 'an'ana. The protagonists of the theory of late recording have interpreted these verbs in the sense of oral transmission. This supposition is only partly true, for the verbs were also used for written transmission, as can be seen from the following discussion:

(i) Tahdīth and its derivatives:-

One of the various modes<sup>1</sup> of taking up traditions (tahammul al-ḥadīth)<sup>1</sup> is the hearing of oral communication of the teacher, technically known in the science of Ḥadīth as simā' (listening). In this process, the teacher, either from his memory or from his book, narrates a tradition orally and the student listens to it. When the student subsequently relates to his own pupils the traditions so learnt, he

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<sup>1</sup> The other ways of taking up traditions are: 'Ard (rehearsal or reading to the teacher); Ijāza (licence to transmit); Munāwala (handing on the manuscript to transmit without accompanying oral communication); Mukātaba (receiving manuscript through correspondence); I'lām (certification) and Wijāda (finding the manuscript after the author's death.) cf. Tahdīth, 187-188.



uses the formula haddathanī or haddathana (lit. 'he narrated ~~me~~ to me' and 'he narrated to us') respectively. The mention of this term in this particular form of transmission generally implies that the student has heard the tradition from his teacher orally even if the teacher had used a book.

But this is only one meaning of the term. The word has been used in various other senses as well, which imply written transmission. While discussing the meaning of ṣaḥīfa we had seen that Ibn Jurayj (d. 150 A.H.) related traditions from Hishām b. 'Urwa's book and used the term 'haddathanā'.<sup>1</sup> We notice that Ibn Jurayj, in this example, did not ask Hishām's permission to narrate ahādīth on his authority; he only confirmed from him if the book contained the traditions related by the latter. Hishām, on the other hand, instead of giving permission to transmit on his authority simply affirmed that the traditions were his.<sup>2</sup> To thus

<sup>1</sup> See Supra, p.216,

<sup>2</sup> Fāsil, 46b. As a general rule, transmission of ḥadīth without teacher's permission is considered inadmissible. But in case of I'lām, where the manuscript is presented to the teacher, who after perusal, returns it to the student, it is implied that he had given a tacit consent to report on his authority. This can be seen in the following example. 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar reports, "We brought a book to Zuhri containing his traditions and asked, 'O Abū Bakr (i.e. Zuhri) are these your traditions? Thereupon he took it, looked into it, and returned it, saying, 'Yes they are my traditions.'" 'Ubayd Allāh continues, "Then we took it from him (and related it on his authority) though he had not read it to us, nor had we asked him for a licence (ijāza) to transmit it on his authority. We only obtained his affirmation that the traditions were his." (cf. JASB, XXV, 1856, pp. 328-29, referring Qādī 'Iyād, Ilmā'). The previous report (see supra, p.216) in which Ibn Jurayj is mentioned as narrating Hishām's ahādīth with the formula haddathanā, also shows that an implied permission was given to him to transmit the ḥadīth. Several other examples have been quoted by Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī to show that haddathanā was not always restricted to oral communication. (cf. Kifāya, pp. 456-465). Instead, the narration from a book was also expressed by this term.



inform the inquirer that a certain book contained his transmission without saying, "Report it on my authority" is technically known as I'lām,<sup>1</sup> - one of the processes of taking up traditions (taḥammul al-ḥadīth).

Bearing this definition in mind we can say that the term ḥaddathanā was also used in I'lām form of reporting which stressed written transmission and does not necessarily imply oral communication.

Another method of taking up traditions is wijāda (finding of manuscript) whereby a ḥadīth is transmitted from a manuscript found after the author's death. In this form of transmission also the formula ḥaddathanā is used, which cannot be translated as 'he reported orally'. On the contrary, it referred to written texts. To take an example, Ishāq b. Rāshid (died during the reign of Manṣūr) once came to Rayy and started relating Zuhri's ahādīth with the formula 'ḥaddathanā 'z-Zuhri (Zuhri related to me). When people got suspicious about his hearing from Zuhri, they asked, 'Where did you meet Zuhri (and heard his traditions)?' Ishāq replied, "I have not met Zuhri; I (only) found a book of his at Jerusalem (from which I am relating)."<sup>2</sup>

We notice that despite the fact that the narrator did not meet the teacher so as to hear from him, he used the term ḥaddathanā to show the manner in which he acquired those ahādīth. Thus we find that the term ḥaddathanā not only refers to verbal but also to written transmission of ḥadīth.

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdīth, 188.; Technical terms, ii, 1068.

<sup>2</sup> "Origins of writing...", JASB, XXV, 1856, p. 328.

Haddathanī or haddathanā was also employed when a student read back his manuscript - either written from dictation or copied from an authenticated text - to the teacher, who, in return, permitted him to transmit the ḥadīth on his authority.<sup>1</sup> This is technically known as 'ard' (rehearsal) method which was very common during Zuhri's time. We find that in this method too, although a student makes use of a written text, yet he uses the formula haddathanī or haddathanā. This is clearly stated by 'Aṭā b. Abī Rabāḥ, who, while replying to Ibn Jurayj's question as what formula should he use to read back his traditions, said, "Say 'haddathanā 'Aṭā'".<sup>2</sup> In the light of this clear statement of 'Aṭā' (d. 117 A.H.), we can say that the terms haddathanī and haddathanā do not necessarily imply oral transmission of ḥadīth.

We have seen that the term haddathanā was employed in simā', i'lām, wijāda and 'ard' methods of taking up traditions where the transmission is made through a written text. It is interesting to note here that the term was also used in mukātaba method, in which the traditions are received through correspondence. Under this method, a tradition of a manuscript received through correspondence is sometimes transmitted with the formula 'haddathanā' although no meeting had taken place between the teacher and the pupil. The teacher's permission to transmit the traditions is implied in this form of transmission. The pupil is not required, therefore, to take formal permission from the teacher when he subsequently meets his master. The following dialogue between Shu'ba and Ma'nūr throws sufficient light on this issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Ma'rifat, 256-258.

<sup>2</sup> Fāsil, 44a.

Shu'ba reports: "Manṣūr sent to me a ḥadīth in writing. Later, when I met him, I asked him to relate the same ḥadīth (with a view to hear it from him verbally and obtain thereby licence to transmit it on his authority).. Thereupon he remarked, 'Did I not relate it to you? When I sent it to you in writing (through post), it implies that I have related it to you. (idhā katabtu bihī ilayka faqad ḥaddathtuka).'"<sup>1</sup> Rāmḥurmuzī and Ḥākim have quoted many instances where narrators are shown relating ahādīth with the formula ḥaddathanī or ḥaddathanā, though they did not meet their teachers but had used their books instead.<sup>2</sup>

In the light of foregoing discussion we can say that the term ḥaddathanā does not necessarily imply oral transmission. Instead, it was used for both oral and written transmission of ḥadīth. Thus to interpret the verb ḥaddatha and its derivative formulas ḥaddathanī and ḥaddathanā in the sense of oral handing on of tradition, and to claim, on the basis of this erroneous interpretation, that none of the tradition contained in the classical collections had been written down before the third century A.H. is misleading and fallacious.

The mistake of taking the word in the sense of oral communication is due to overlooking the historical fact that in earlier days it was the fashion to refer to authors instead of works.<sup>3</sup> When the protagonists of late recording of ḥadīth failed to find the names of books, they mistakenly thought that the manuscripts were learnt by heart. Hence the theory that traditions remained unwritten until so late as the second or third century after the hijra.

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<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 43b, 44a, 48a.; Ma'rifat, 261.

<sup>2</sup> Fāsil, 43a-47b.; Ma'rifat, 210-211.

<sup>3</sup> Manuscripts, 198.; "Origin of writing...", JASB, 1856, p. 109.; Papyri, i, 10, 24.

(ii) Jama'a and Riwaya:-

Another category of words that are generally misunderstood are such basic verbs as jama'a (he collected) and rawa (he narrated). The protagonists of oral transmission of ḥadīth believe that these verbs imply only oral transmission, while the fact is that both of them have time and again been used for written ahādīth as well. We will show below that the terms were not restricted to indicate oral transmission only.

The verb jama'a, meaning he collected, is loosely accepted as synonym of hafiza, meaning 'he memorised',<sup>1</sup> although this is only an extension of its primary meaning, namely 'to collect it in a written collection.' However, if unqualified, the word implied both memorisation and writing. In order to determine which of these two meanings is intended one has to depend on the context. For instance, the phrase "jama'a dīwān al-ʿArab", used for Walid II, has been rightly translated as 'he collected the (written) records of the Arabs<sup>2</sup> - their poetry, history, genealogy, and dialects', and not as 'he memorised these records.' This interpretation could be made possible in view of the fact that these written records did actually reach the hands of Ḥammād ar-Rāwiyā (d. 156 A.H.) and Jannād.<sup>3</sup> It is most likely that Walid, who patronized poets and scholars, had collected these materials in writing during his reign. Thus it appears that the verb jama'a in the above expression meant 'he collected in written form.'

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffery (ed.), Materials for the History of the text of the Qur'an, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, i, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, i, 18.; Fihrist, 134.

The word in this sense has been used in connection with written collections of ḥadīth scholars as well. Thus, in the phrase 'Amwal man jama'a l-musnad'<sup>1</sup> used for Na'īm b. Ḥammād, the verb 'jama'a' has to be translated as 'he collected' and not as 'he memorised'.

It was because of this meaning, perhaps, that early written collections of traditions were titled as jāmi', majmū', majmū'a and majmū'āt. Similarly, the Qur'ān was known as Jāmi' for its scattered written sheets had been collected together in one volume.

The verb Jama'a should, therefore, be translated as 'he collected' and not as 'he memorised'. So, when the term occurs in connection with a traditionist's contribution to ḥadīth, it should generally be assumed that a particular traditionist had collected the traditions in written form and not that he had memorised them.

Like 'jama'a', the verb 'rawā' which apparently refers to oral transmission had often been employed to denote a written channel through which ḥadīth was transmitted. Wāqidī's Kitāb al-Maghāzī is a well known book which was published long after the author's death. We find the names of successive scholars who had handed down the entire book from the author's time till its first editor. This transmission must have been made either orally or through writing. In order to denote the channel through which one narrator received the text from his predecessor, the word rawā (he narrated) is used which apparently implies an oral communication. But it seems highly improbable that the entire work was

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<sup>1</sup> Tdh, ii, 7.

kept in memory by every generation and verbally reported to succeeding scholars. Most probably, the text had been written and was transmitted by means of reading the script to his students, who in turn, also wrote it down but used the expression rawā. The word rawā used in this process does not, therefore, indicate an oral handing on of tradition; it rather suggests a written transmission.

Discussing the meaning of this term, Von Kremer says that the word rawā, in the Isnād of this book, cannot be taken to mean oral reporting. He further elaborates this point and remarks: "Ibn at-Tarrāh (the editor) seems to have been the first who put in order the rich store of traditions which Wākidy had deposited in his book: he arranged them chronologically and formed from them an uninterrupted recital of Mohammad's Campaigns: this at least we suppose to be the meaning of the word riwāya<sup>1</sup> used in the Arabic text, which cannot have here the sense of a mere oral narration."<sup>2</sup>

Thus we see that the term rawā, like jama'a, indicates not only oral but written transmission of ḥadīth.

(iii) Akhbarānā, 'an and other terms:-

Akhbarānī, akhbarānā and 'an are other misleading terms which are taken to mean oral communication. This interpretation is also only partly correct since the terms imply both written and oral transmission of ḥadīth. Though primarily they connote only speech, in the isnād usage

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<sup>1</sup> The word in the quotation is in Arabic script.

<sup>2</sup> Magh (Preface), 7.

they also denote a written channel through which a ḥadīth reaches from one narrator to another.

The first two terms are in fact synonymous of ḥaddathanī and ḥaddathanā respectively, though some scholars have tried to distinguish them by saying that the term akhbaranā was used in simā', while ḥaddathanā, in 'ard or qirā' at method of transmitting ḥadīth. In other words, when a teacher read to his student, either from his book or from memory, the pupil at the time of transmitting to his own student, should use the formula ḥaddathanā. On the other hand, when a student read to his teacher from a manuscript, either copied from teacher's own book or from his dictation, and the teacher, on his part listened and approved, the student at the time of transmitting the ḥadīth to his own pupils should use the formula akhbaranā.<sup>1</sup> But this difference was not strictly observed.<sup>2</sup> Both the terms were employed interchangeably, and the use of ḥaddathanā and akhbaranā indicated sam' as well as 'ard methods. Actually the main intention to use these terms was not so much to specify the method of transmission as to stress that the transmission was rather direct.

We have seen that in spite of the fact that the formula ḥaddathanā literally meant an oral transmission, it was used to show that reporting was from a written text. Likewise, the term akhbaranā implied a written transmission as well. To take an example, Ḥumayd aṭ-Ṭawīl dictated a tradition to his student from his book. When the student transmitted this ḥadīth to his own pupils, he used the usual formula akhbaranā<sup>3</sup> and did not refer to his teacher's book.

<sup>1</sup> Tahdīth, 207-208.; Fāsil, 44b, 46b.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdīth, 207-208.; Kifāya, 438-445.; Tahdh, ii, 442.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad, iii, 243.



The formula 'an (lit. from) is also supposed to indicate that the tradition was received orally. But this assertion, too, is only half true. We find frequent references in collections of ḥadīth which show that the narrators reported the ḥadīth from their teachers' books but employed the formula 'an (from). The reputed figure who employs this practice too frequently - and is sometimes criticised for doing so - is 'Amr b. Shu'ayb (d. 118 A.H.), who narrates the ahādīth from his grandfather's books with the formula 'an.<sup>1</sup>

apart from akhbaranī, akhbaranā and 'an, the formulae anba'anā (he informed us), sami'tu (I heard) and ḥafiztu (I remembered) which apparently imply oral communication, were as well employed for written transmission.

(iv) Dhakara and Qāla:-

Literally speaking, the verb dhakara (he mentioned) is synonym of qāla (he said) and both connote oral communication. But the earlier authors used these terms for written records and for different connotations. The formula qāla was used when the author referred to his own book, while dhakara was employed when some one else's work was quoted.<sup>2</sup> Thus the phrases 'qāla Ibn Ishāq' and 'qāla Wahb' were used by the authors themselves to refer to their own books, Sīra and Kitāb at-Tijān, respectively.

The mention of dhakara, on the other hand, showed that the narrator or the author was referring to the written work of someone else.

<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, viii, 49, 50, 53.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, i, 15, 16, 53.

But in neither case should the terms be taken to mean strictly oral transmission. Ibn Ishāq, who had frequently used 'Qāla Ibn Ishāq' in his Sīra, was not actually benefitted by oral transmission. He rather resorted to available written sources, found in booksellers' shops for the material of his famed book.<sup>1</sup>

(v) Tadwīn and Tasnīf:-

The verbs dawwana (lit. he compiled or collected) and sannafa (lit. he classified) have also been misinterpreted to mean 'he wrote'. Accordingly, the statement 'awwal man dawwan al-'ilm Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhri'<sup>2</sup> has been wrongly translated as 'the first who wrote 'ilm (i.e. ḥadīth) was Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhri'. On the basis of this translation the theory emerged that the writing of ḥadīth began so late as in Zuhri's period i.e. at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century after the hijra. But truly speaking the term dawwana is used to denote 'the collection and compilation of already written texts' and not 'the writing for the first time'. The above statement should, therefore, be translated as 'the first who compiled the (written) collections of ḥadīth was Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhri'.

We know that the reputation of Zuhri rests on his extensive use of written collections of ḥadīth and of his giving a systematic treatment to this discipline. His age - the age of manuscripts - brought to picture a large number of ḥadīth collections which were assimilated in major compilations of ḥadīth. No doubt, Zuhri and his contemporaries received some aḥādīth orally as well, but they were mainly benefitted by existing written collections of ḥadīth. Hence Zuhri's reputation as 'the first to compile 'ilm i.e. ḥadīth'.

<sup>1</sup> Bagh, i, 229-232.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 73.; Tahdīth, 46.; Safwat, ii, 78.

The verb dawwana to indicate 'the compilation' rather than 'writing' was employed in connection with other illustrious traditionists as well. It is said, for instance, that Mālik and Ibn Abī Dhi'b made compilations (dawwana) of ḥadīth in Medina, Ibn Jurayj and Ibn 'Uyayna at Mecca, Ath-Thawrī at Kufa and Rabi' b. Ṣubayḥ at Basra.<sup>1</sup> It seems that the scholars mentioned above had prepared their collections of ḥadīth from already written sources and established their reputation as authorities on ḥadīth in their respective cities.

In a statement found in al-Fihrist, the verb dawwana seems to mean 'writing for the first time', but another report dealing with similar matter disallows this interpretation. We take up both statements to illustrate the meaning of this term. Mu'āwiya, who was highly impressed by 'Ubayd b. Sharya's knowledge about Arabs and their history, once asked the latter regarding Arab and non-Arab kings and also regarding certain historical anecdotes. When 'Ubayd apprised Mu'āwiya of these information, the latter ordered that they be taken down and ascribed to 'Ubayd b. Sharya. (fa amara Mu'āwiya an yudawwan wa yunsab ilā 'Ubayd b. Sharya).<sup>2</sup>

The word yudawwan in this report seems to mean 'writing for the first time'. But in another report, describing the same incident, where the verb dawwana again occurs, the term means 'the recording of already written text i.e. compilation'. According to this report, Mu'āwiya asked his secretaries to take these information down (yuwaqqi 'hū) and then, collect or compile it (yudawwinhu).<sup>3</sup> As we see, in

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<sup>1</sup> Hujja, i, 331-332.

<sup>2</sup> Fihrist, 132.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, i, 10..

this report the verb dawwana is preceded by wagga'a which suggests that while the latter denoted the making of first draft, the former refers to making a fair copy and to collect in a book.

Thus it appears that the verb dawwana does not refer to writing for the first time; instead, it refers to collecting of already written materials.

Literally speaking, tadwīn denotes the comprehension (taḥyīd) of dishevelled, loose written sheets into one volume so as to save it from being lost.<sup>1</sup> The author of Tāj al-ʿArūs defines the word dawwana as 'he collected',<sup>2</sup> while its derivative dīwan has been interpreted by Fayrūzābādī as 'collection of loose sheets' (ad-dīwan mujtamaʿ as-suhuf).<sup>3</sup>

On the basis of this definition of the verbal form tadwīn, it cannot be taken to mean as merely 'writing'. It denotes, on the other hand, the compilation and collection of existing written text.

As regards the verb taṣnīf, it is even wider in meaning than that of tadwīn. It implies the 'classification' of already collected records into various sections. Literally speaking, the expression ṣannafahū indicates 'he categorised it into various kinds and distinguished some of it from some other. (jaʿalahū aṣnāfan wa mayyaza baʿdahā ʿan baʿd)'.<sup>4</sup> In other words, taṣnīf is to arrange the already collected material into

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<sup>1</sup> Taḥyīd (Intr.), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Tāj, ix, 204.

<sup>3</sup> Tāj, ix, 204.

<sup>4</sup> Tāj, vi, 168. The Prophet is also reported to have used the term in its literal sense of 'assortment'. Asking Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh to make different 'assorted collections' of dates, he says, "ṣannif tamrak." [cf. SB, ii, 87 (Istiqrāḍ wa adāʿd-duyūn); Irshād, iv, 227.]

various sections and different chapters.<sup>1</sup>

Used in connection with ḥadīth collection, it refers to classification of ḥadīth material according to contents. Thus a ḥadīth work arranged according to subject matter is known as muṣannaf (arranged), in contrast to musnad collections in which the traditions are collected under the name of transmitters, irrespective of the subject matter of ḥadīth. It was due to this definition of the term muṣannaf that all canonical ḥadīth collections - which are arranged according to subject - are enumerated as muṣannafāt, the plural of muṣannaf.

In major biographical dictionaries, we often come across the expressions 'awwal man ṣannafa 'l-musnad'<sup>2</sup> and 'mimman jama'a wa ṣannafa'. The verb ṣannafa used in these expressions does not imply merely writing; instead it means 'a systematic collection according to subject matter.' For example, the expressions 'awwal man ṣannafa 'l-musnad bi 'l-kūfa'<sup>3</sup> and 'awwal man ṣannafa 'l-musnad bi 'l-Baṣra'<sup>4</sup>, used for Yaḥyā b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (d. 228 A.H.) and Musaddad (d. 228 A.H.) respectively, do not obviously imply that these scholars were the first who wrote aḥādīth in their respective cities. Neither does the verb ṣannafa used here indicate that they collected aḥādīth in volumes, for which the expression dawwana was normally used. Instead, it means that they were the first in their cities to arrange the subject matter of musnad collections into muṣannaf collections.

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd (Intr.), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Tdh, ii, 103-105.

<sup>3</sup> Tdh, ii, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Tdh, ii, 11. ..

(vi) Statements of and about traditionists:-

Apart from misuse and misinterpretation of both nominal and verbal terms discussed above, certain phrases and statements have also been misunderstood and misrepresented, giving an impression that the writing of ḥadīth was disapproved by early traditionists and its recording could take place only after lapse of a considerable time. Since these phrases and statements can be interpreted both in favour and against writing ḥadīth, it is unjustifiable to use them only in the latter sense. Truly speaking, they seem to convey a sense more in favour than against writing of ḥadīth, as can be clearly seen from the following few examples:

The phrase mā ra'aytu fī yadihī kitāban caṭṭu (I never saw a book in his hand), used about many eminent traditionists,<sup>1</sup> is generally taken to mean that the traditionists for whom these epithets have been applied were against writing ḥadīth.<sup>2</sup> But looking at the literary contribution of these scholars, and finding mention of their large collections of ḥadīth one arrives at the conclusion that the phrase did not refer to opposition to written traditions. As a matter of fact, the phrase was used to show the extraordinary power of memorisation of the traditionists concerned. It indicated that the traditionist concerned used to dictate or read out the traditions to his pupils without consulting a book.

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<sup>1</sup> Among the notable traditionists, for whom this phrase has been used are the following: Ismā'īl b. Ayyāsh (cf. Bagh, vi, 224), Sulaymān b. Harb (cf. Bagh, viii, 70-71.), Hammād b. Zayd (cf. Bagh, xiii, 475-476.), Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (cf. Bagh, xiii, 475-476.), Sufyān ath-Thawrī (cf. Bagh, xiii, 475-476.), Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (cf. Bagh, xiii, 475-476.), 'Abd ar-Rahmān b. Mahdī (cf. Bagh, xiv, 140.) Yazīd b. Hārūn (cf. Bagh, xiv, 338-341.), and Ibn 'Ulayya (cf. Tdh, i, 296.)

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, ii, 61. ..

Technically speaking, they employed only memory in sinā' method of transmitting ḥadīth.

The phrase may also indicate that the said traditionist was either illiterate or blind, "who could not possibly make use of books"<sup>1</sup>, and so was not seen with a book in his hand.

Another misleading phrase in this connection is 'lā yuktib ḥadīthahū' or 'lā yuktab ḥadīthuhū' which allows two interpretations on the basis of vowelling. In the first reading, it means 'he did not dictate his traditions' whereas the second reading would mean 'his ḥadīth was not to be written down'. The protagonists of ḥadīth opponents take the phrase in the first sense and claim that a particular traditionist did not dictate aḥādīth out of his prejudice against writing. But the existence of written collections ascribed to him makes this interpretation unacceptable. We are forced, therefore, to interpret the phrase in its second sense, which has nothing to do with writing as such, as is clear from the following.

The phrases 'yuktab ḥadīthuhū' (his ḥadīth is written down) and 'lā yuktab ḥadīthuhū' (his ḥadīth is not written down) connoted respectively the reliability and non-reliability of a particular traditionist and were not used in their pure literal sense. To take for instance, the statements 'kāna Sa'īd b. Jubayr yuktab 'anhu'<sup>2</sup> and 'kāna yuktab wa yus'al Ibn 'Umar'<sup>3</sup> mean respectively that Sa'īd b. Jubayr and Ibn 'Umar were

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<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 338-339.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 103, n.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 103, n.; Tahdh, v, 327.



reliable authorities, and traditions related by them can be taken as genuine and may be transmitted. Accordingly, the phrase 'hujjatun, yuktab ḥadīthuhū' (he is authoritative, his ḥadīth is to be [may be] written down) was used for reliable authorities on ḥadīth, while the formula 'yuktab ḥadīthuhū wa lā yuḥtaj bihī<sup>1</sup>' (his ḥadīth may be written down (for reference and comparison) but should not be adduced as proof) referred to comparatively less reliable authorities. Similarly, the unreliable authorities on ḥadīth were described as 'lā yuktab ḥadīthuhū<sup>2</sup>' (his ḥadīth is not to be written down). This epithet recommends outright rejection of a traditionist's ḥadīth.

In view of the above technical sense in which the term yuktab was used, it can be easily seen that it has nothing to do with writing as such. The expression 'lā yuktab ḥadīthuhū' cannot, therefore, be taken to mean an opposition to writing.

We also come across few statements made by traditionists which have been wrongly interpreted to mean an aversion to writing though the statements can be interpreted both in favour and against recording of traditions. The best example which can be cited in this connection is the statement of 'Amir ash-Sha'bī. In one of the statements he said, "I neither wrote with black on white nor did I ask any man to repeat a ḥadīth twice to me."<sup>3</sup> This statement has been taken to mean an aversion towards writing and so Sha'bī was declared an opponent

<sup>1</sup> As in the case of Baqīya b. al-Walīd and Yūnus b. Bukayr. (cf. Jarḥ, ii, 127-28, 154, 227.; Kifāya, 212.)

<sup>2</sup> As in the case of Rishdīn b. Sa'd (cf. Jarḥ (Intr.), 322.; Jarḥ, i, 513) and Abū'l-Bakhtarī (cf. Lisān al-Mizān, vi, 232-233.) Also see Jarḥ, iii, 242-243, Kifāya, 190, 204.; Mizān, i, 174, no. 706.; and Bagh, xiv, 330.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VI, 174.; Bāwān, i, 67.; Bagh, xii, 229.; Ilm, 4a.; Fāsil, 36b.

of recording ḥadīth.<sup>1</sup> But if we look at the statement closely we come to the conclusion that the statement does not deal with the question of recording of ḥadīth; it merely shows the powerful retentive memory of Sha'bi who, according to statement, could learn a ḥadīth by heart in only one hearing. It is wrong, therefore, to interpret the statement in the sense of Sha'bi's dislike of recording ḥadīth.

The wrong conclusion was, perhaps, arrived at by taking only the first half of his statement, namely 'I never wrote with black on white'. Had the statement been taken in full, such an interpretation would not have been given.

That Sha'bi was not against writing ḥadīth is evident from another statement of his in which he asked his students to write everything that they heard from him not only on writing materials they had, but even on the wall (to be transferred, of course, in permanent records later) if nothing to write on was readily available.<sup>2</sup> Few more statements of Sha'bi which testify his favourable attitude towards writing are: 'the book is the register of knowledge'<sup>3</sup> and 'the best traditionist is the daftar (book)'.<sup>4</sup>

We can conclude, therefore, that Sha'bi's statement 'mā katabtu sawdā'fī baydā' qattū' (I never wrote with black on white) does not prove his dislike of writing. On the contrary, he encouraged written transmission of ḥadīth as is evident from his other statements.

<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 48, n.; As-Sunna, 323.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VI, 174.; Taqyīd, 100.; Fāsil, 36a.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 75.; Taqyīd, 99.; Fāsil, 35b.

<sup>4</sup> Papyri, ii, 228.; Mst, ii, 199/185.

To sum up, the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of certain nominal and verbal terms like ṣaḥīfa, mushaf, ḥaddatha and Jama'a, and of certain statements as that of Sha'bi, are some of the factors responsible for giving birth to the theory of late recording of ḥadīth.

(iv) Biased view about Jāhiliyya period and Umayyad dynasty:-

Another factor responsible for the emergence of the theory of late recording of ḥadīth is the prevalent biased view of later scholars regarding both pre-Islamic and Umayyad period. Despite the presence of religious and non-religious literature referred to earlier<sup>1</sup>, and despite proof of employment of writing in pre-Islamic Arabia, this period is painted in very dark colours and it is believed that the age preceding the advent of Islam was devoid of any literary and cultural achievements whatsoever. Even Ibn Khaldūn could not refrain from exaggerating the primitiveness of pre-Islamic Arabs. This was all done to extol the merit of Islam which had brought a great change in the life of bedouin Arabs. Objectively speaking, to deprive the bedouin race of its achievements, however small it might be, is to deny the fact of history. The Arabs' qualities of murū'a (manly qualities) and generosity, their unrivalled photographic memory and their classic poetry and ayyām, themselves bespeak the moral, cultural and literary achievements of pre-Islamic Arabia. How, then, can we deny these historical facts and consider pre-Islamic Arabs an illiterate, uncultured and inhuman race. We know fairly well that the Prophet himself retained a number of pre-Islamic practices even after the advent of Islam.<sup>2</sup> Does it not itself suggest the presence of at least 'some culture' among bedouin Arabs?

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<sup>1</sup> See supra, Chapter III, pp. 135-152.

<sup>2</sup> Asnām, 19, 20, 48.; Muḥabbar, 236, 309, 310, 311, 319, 321, 322, 329.

The advocates of the theory of late recording of ḥadīth ignore these facts and present the pre-Islamic Arabs as 'illiterate' race. Forgetful of the prevailing literacy of Arabia, they believe that no written literature existed before Islam. They further claim that there were only seventeen literates on the eve of Islam. On the basis of this hypothesis they assert that the recording of ḥadīth was not possible at least for a few generations following Muḥammad's death. Thus we see that they base their theory on their erroneous belief that pre-Islamic Arabs were absolutely illiterate - a claim which we have already refuted in the preceeding chapter.

The advocates of this theory not only belittle the achievements of pre-Islamic Arabs; they also deny the literary and cultural achievements of Umayyad dynasty. In order to show the superiority of Abbasids over Umayyads, the historians, writing under the shadow of the former, completely ignore the intellectual achievements of the Umayyads. Despite the fact that Umayyads took keen interest in the field of traditions and undertook the task of writing, collecting and editing of ahādīth, it is claimed that the writing of traditions took place only during Abbasid regime. According to this theory, the traditions had to wait for more than one hundred years before they could be collected into books. The protagonists of this theory believe that throughout the period of one whole century, the traditions were transmitted orally. This claim, though unfounded, was apparently made to extol the merits of Abbasids who are supposed to be the saviours and custodians of religious literature. While describing the admirable achievements of the period from Maṣṣūr to al-Māmūn, the biased historians give very little reference to the cultural foundation laid by Umayyads. The contribution of Umayyad caliphs who took personal

interest in furtherance of religious literature, especially the tradition, were totally ignored. Similarly, the great achievements of scholars who lived in this period of Islamic history were not acknowledged.

As a matter of fact the anti-Umayyad historians and scholars were reluctant to acknowledge even obvious achievements of Umayyads and to give credit due to them. Jāḥiẓ, for instance, remarks: "The Umayyads had not one who excelled in Jurisprudence, Tradition and Qur'ānic commentary and interpretation."<sup>1</sup> This biased statement of Jāḥiẓ is only a reflection of the anti-Umayyad tendency of his time. Nevertheless, this pro-Abbasid scholar could not help recognising - though indirectly - the contribution of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz in the field of ḥadīth in an oblique passage.<sup>2</sup> But as a rule, the Umayyads' achievements have been completely ignored by anti-Umayyad and pro-Abbasid historians and scholars.

Confining ourselves with the question of recording of ḥadīth, we find that anti-Umayyad propaganda made some scholars believe that the transmission of ḥadīth throughout Umayyad dynasty remained oral, and the task of writing was first undertaken in Abbasid times. This theory was easily developed by adducing supporting arguments from available literature which was the product of Abbasid period. Unfortunately, all Umayyad literature was either perished or remained obscure and could not, therefore, be produced to counteract the Abbasid claim. The modern researches have, however, enabled us to look at this issue more objectively. Now we can say with more certainty, thanks to the discovery of many early records, that the writing of ḥadīth had

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, i, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, i, 19. ..

started long before Abbasids came into power, even prior to Umayyad dynasty, in the time of the Companions.

To sum up, it can be safely said that just as the achievements of the Jāhiliyya period was ignored in order to extol the merits of Islamic religion, in the same manner were the contributions of Umayyads belittled to prove the superiority of Abbasids over the Umayyads. With this view in mind, the theory was evolved that the transmission of ḥadīth remained oral for almost over a century, until with Abbasids' coming into power, they were committed to writing.

Thus we see that the theory of late recording of ḥadīth was partly based on the biased view of Abbasid scholars and historians.

## 2. Writing of ḥadīth in early Islam:-

Having seen the falsity of assumption that traditions began to be recorded only after a century, let us revert to the Prophet's and companions' age and see what arrangement, if any, was made to preserve the traditions in black and white.

The basic question in connection with writing of ḥadīth can be asked: "Was there any necessity of doing so at all?" The answer to this question would look simple to a modern mind who shall reply: "If sunna of the Prophet were to be preserved, ḥadīth must have been written down." But this answer takes for granted the superiority of writing over other forms of preserving information. No doubt several religious and profane literature of pre-Islamic and early Islamic era were written in black and white; it is a well known fact that memory and not writing

was the main source of preserving knowledge in those days.

Furthermore, the non-availability of paper and lack of other writing materials had made the task of writing cumbersome. Under these circumstances, it would be wrong to hold that for preservation of sunna writing was inevitable. Undoubtedly, the writing was frequently used for recording of ḥadīth but it was not the sole method of preserving the sunna. Most often the memory, after the fashion of the day, was employed for this purpose. In fact, memory and writing both were used for recording the sayings of the Prophet. It was quite in accord with the pre-Islamic tradition of preserving poetry, genealogy and battle deeds orally and recording wise sayings and few religious teachings in majalla and ṣahīfa.

The early Muslims employed both the methods to preserve the sayings and actions of Muḥammad, although after Islam, the writing, and not memory, was emphasised. We find that the Qur'ān not only refers (indirectly) to writing by providing a complete list of writing material; it encourages the recording of almost all important transactions in black and white. The Prophet, on his part, encouraged the writing to such an extent that not only the complete Qur'ān was written down but all treaties, contracts and official correspondence was committed to writing.

The question, then, arises as to what extent was the writing employed to preserve the Prophet's ḥadīth. It is commonly believed that the bulk of ḥadīth material was learnt by heart. This traditional view disregards the services of early writers of ḥadīth. Viewed objectively, it can be seen that writing was employed, right from the Prophet's time onwards, to record the traditions. Although no formal arrangement was



made to write down the Prophet's ḥadīth, sporadic recording did take

place in various forms, which we detail hereunder:

(i) Writing to memorise:- The Arabs who were well-known for their retentive memory sometimes used writing as an aid to memory. The new Prophet, who had introduced to them a systematic code of life, was looked ~~to~~ with great respect and his words and deeds were too meaningful to early Arabs. It was natural, therefore, that the teachings of new religion and the sayings of its Prophet be preserved. Over and above all, the Prophet's specific order to communicate and transmit his teachings to those who were unable to contact him<sup>1</sup>, had given further impetus to remember his words and actions. To carry out his order, they employed whatever means they had to popularise his teachings. Those who knew the art of writing wrote them in black and white; the others relied solely on their memory and related the memorised traditions to their colleagues. There were others, who wrote the traditions in order to memorise them; after memorising the written records were destroyed. This fact shows that the traditions used to be preserved in black and white, though some of the written records were later destroyed.

(ii) Juristic and religious motive:- The traditions were also recorded because they contained some religious formulae. Being too enthusiastic about the new religion, the companions must have been keen to learn every formula that was to be recited in prayers. Generally it was done orally, but for the sake of accuracy and because of their length, certain formulas were written down before they could be memorised. The formula of tashahhud is one such example.<sup>2</sup> The Prophet himself dictated some

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<sup>1</sup> Jāmi', x, 136-137. (ʿilm); Bayān, i, 39.; ii, 124.; Maʿrifat, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 93.

tenets of Islam and handed them over to the delegates who called on him from distant places.<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the conquest of Mecca, Abū Shāh was given a written copy of the Prophet's sermon because it contained many legal provisions.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the laws regarding alms and blood money were sent in writing to various governors during the Prophet's lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

Sufyān al-Thawrī points to this religious and juristic motive when he says that one of the reasons why he wrote ahādīth was to make it a dīn<sup>4</sup>, i.e. in order to preserve a record of religious laws. It seems that the primary motive behind the collection of ḥadīth was always juristic. Jeffery says, "The corpus Traditions, recording the sayings and doings of the Prophet was compiled in the first instance ... in the interests of jurisprudence."<sup>5</sup> Gibb also believes that 'the first written collection of traditions were..made for legal purposes.'<sup>6</sup>

(iii) To know the life history of the Prophet:- Some of the new converts, impressed by the dynamic personality of the Prophet, were keenly interested to know and even to record the details of Muḥammad's everyday life. They watched him for this purpose in the home, in the market-place, in the mosque and in the battlefields and wrote down numerous details about his life. In the words of Gibb, "the characteristic religious activity... of the first century was the collection and transmission of details about the life and action of Mohammad."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, I, ii, 15-38.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 70.; Fāsil, 34a.

<sup>3</sup> Futūh, 80-83.

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, i, 76.

<sup>5</sup> Reader, 283.

<sup>6</sup> Mohemmadanism, 78.

<sup>7</sup> Mohemmadanism, 73.

This written record about the Prophet's every day life, later formed the subject matter of the ḥadīth.

Although the complete works on the Prophet's biography appeared quite late, yet these works were, in all probability, based on some written collections dealing with the life-history of the Prophet.

The works on the biography of the Prophet had started appearing from the time of the Companions. 'Urwa (d.93. A.H.), in his biography of the Prophet, names the authorities from whom he had obtained information. It is possible that he had received some information in writing, for monographs and pamphlets on single topics of Sīra are reported to have been written before him. We find, for instance, references of the 'Memorandum of the Servants of the Prophet'<sup>1</sup> and 'a book on the ambassadors of the Prophet to rulers and chieftains'.<sup>2</sup> Prof. Watt has rightly remarked: "While the ordering of this (maghāzī) material must have been the work of scholars, the preservation of it until the scholars collected it must have been the work of the Muslims in general or at least of some Muslims."<sup>3</sup>

(iv) Incidental quotation in correspondence:- Sometimes the traditions were quoted in private letters. This was done either in reply to questions about the Prophet's decisions in a given problem or in compliance of a request to send the Prophet's ḥadīth. Some traditions were quoted just incidentally as well. Here are a few examples to illustrate these cases.

(i) Mu'āwiya wrote to Mughīra asking for few ahadīth. The latter

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, I, ii, 179-180.

<sup>2</sup> Annales, i, 1560.

<sup>3</sup> Watt, "The materials used by Ibn Ishaq", Historians of the Middle East, 27.

complied with his request by sending the traditions by post.<sup>1</sup>

(ii) Ibn 'Abbās wrote to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī enquiring about a certain ḥadīth. The latter sent the same by return post.<sup>2</sup>

(iii) Ibn Abī Mulayka (d. 117 A.H.) asked Ibn 'Abbās to send him some aḥādīth which were unknown to him. The latter complied with his request by sending the traditions in a letter.<sup>3</sup> In another report, Ibn 'Abbās sent one particular ḥadīth required by the same Ibn Abī Mulayka. The ḥadīth was the following: 'It is the defendant who should be sworn in legal disputes.'<sup>4</sup>

(iv) Abū Bakra sent the following ḥadīth to his son: "The Messenger of God has declared that no arbitrator should decide a case between the litigants while he is in a state of anger."<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes the queries used to come to the companions regarding the authenticity of a particular tradition. These aḥādīth were naturally quoted in black and white in the letters. To take an example Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān wrote to 'Ā'isha to confirm whether a certain ḥadīth (quoted in the letter) was correctly reported by Ibn 'Abbās. 'Ā'isha, informing the questioner that Ibn 'Abbās had misquoted the Prophet, sent the correct version of the tradition.<sup>6</sup>

Very often the Prophet's behaviour in different walks of life were reported in these letters. For instance, a letter was despatched

<sup>1</sup> SB, iv, 423 (I tiṣām).

<sup>2</sup> Musnad (Ṭ), ii, 71.

<sup>3</sup> SM, i, (Intr.), 7.

<sup>4</sup> SAD, iii, 423 (aqdiya), ḥadīth no. 3619.

<sup>5</sup> SB, iv, 388 (Aḥkām).; Jāmi', vi, 77-78 (Aḥkām).; SAD, iii, 411 (Aqdiya), ḥadīth no. 3589.

<sup>6</sup> SB, i, 427 (Ḥajj).

to Sālim Abū an-Naḍr, the freed slave and scribe of 'Umar b. 'Abd Allāh, containing the Prophet's directions, given to muslims in previous battles against the enemies. The letter was sent by 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Awfā to boost the morale of Sālim who had gone to fight against the Harurites.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the letters referred to above, the following is a list, made at random from available early sources, of some of the senders and recipients of letters containing the Prophet's traditions.

<u>Name of the sender</u>	<u>Name of the recipient</u>
1. 'Abd Allāh b. Hurmuz (d. 100 A.H.)	Tamīm al-Jayshānī <sup>2</sup>
2. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar (d. 74 A.H.)	'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān <sup>3</sup>
3. 'Abd Allāh b. Zubayr (d. 73 A.H.)	'Abd Allāh b. 'Utba b. Mas'ūd <sup>4</sup>
4. Abū Mūsa al-Ash'arī (d. 42/51 A.H.)	'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd <sup>5</sup>
5. Abū 'Uthmān an-Nahdī (d. 95 A.H.)	Sulaymān at-Taymī <sup>6</sup>
6. 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 117 A.H.)	Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb <sup>7</sup>
7. Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays b. Khālīd (d. 65 A.H.)	Qays b. al-Haytham <sup>8</sup>
8. Ibrāhīm an-Nakha'ī (d. 96 A.H.)	Qatāda and others <sup>9</sup>
9. Jarīr b. 'Abd Allāh al-Bajalī (d. 151 A.H.)	Mu'āwiyā <sup>10</sup>
10. Khālīd b. Abī 'Imrān (d. 125 A.H.)	Yahyā b. Sa'īd <sup>11</sup>
11. Nāfi', the freed slave of Ibn 'Umar (d. 117 A.H.)	Ayyūb as-Sikhtiyānī <sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SB, ii, 253-254. (Jihād).

<sup>2</sup> Musnad, ii, 531.

<sup>3</sup> Ṭab, IV, i, 110-111.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad, iv, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad, iv, 396, 414.

<sup>6</sup> SB, iv, 115-116 (Adab).

<sup>7</sup> SB, ii, 43 (Buyū'); iii, 240 (Tafsīr al-Qur'ān)

<sup>8</sup> Musnad, iii, 453.; Usd, iii, 37.; Isāba, ii, 207, no. 4169.

<sup>9</sup> Fāsil, 48b.

<sup>10</sup> Musnad, iv, 361.

<sup>11</sup> Fāsil, 48b.

<sup>12</sup> Kifāya, 488.; Fāsil, 48b.

<u>Name of the sender</u>	<u>Name of the recipient</u>
12. Nu'mān b. Bashīr (d. 64 A.H.)	Qays b. al-Haytham <sup>1</sup>
13. Qatāda (d. 117 A.H.)	Awzā'ī <sup>2</sup>
14. Salmān al-Fārisī (d. 32/36 A.H.)	Abū 'd-Dardā, <sup>3</sup>
15. 'Umar b. 'Abd Allāh b. al Arqam	'Abd Allāh b. 'Utba (d. 74 A.H.) <sup>4</sup>
16. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23 A.H.)	Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāh <sup>5</sup>
17. Zayd b. Arqam (d. 66 A.H.)	Anas b. Mālik <sup>6</sup>
18. Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.)	Ruzayq b. <sup>Hukaym</sup> Ḥakīm <sup>7</sup>
19. Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.)	Ja'far b. Rabī'a <sup>8</sup>

(v) Recording for private use: stray ahādith:-

In view of the importance of the Prophet's words and deeds, some companions wished to have his sayings or sermons recorded in written form. Abū Shāh, as we have seen, had requested the Prophet to have a written copy of his sermon. Furthermore, according to wont of Arabs to record the proverbs and pithy sayings, some people had recorded one or two such ahādith, which appealed to them. One such example has been provided by Ibn Sa'd who reports: "Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit (d. 119 A.H.) said, 'I possess no written material on earth except a solitary ḥadīth which is preserved in my wooden case.'"<sup>9</sup> Similarly, when Anas heard 'Itbān narrating a ḥadīth and it appealed to him, he wrote it down after taking his permission to do so.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Musnad, iv, 277.  
<sup>2</sup> Fāsil, 48b.  
<sup>3</sup> Mizān, iv, 546, no. 10375.  
<sup>4</sup> SB, iii, 62-63 (Maghāzī), 478 (Talāq).  
<sup>5</sup> SIM, ii, 166 (Farā'id).  
<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, iii, 394.  
<sup>7</sup> SB, i, 227-228 (Jum'a).  
<sup>8</sup> SB, i, 218 (Adhān).  
<sup>9</sup> Tab, VI, 223.  
<sup>10</sup> Fāsil, 35a.

(vi) Prophet's own written material:- Some ahādīth were indirectly preserved in official correspondence of the Prophet. Among these may be mentioned the contracts, treaties, pacts, circulars to governors of provinces, letter to chieftains and other rulers, and letters containing specific laws regarding alms, rites and rituals.

(vii) Incidental recording by hadīth students:- It is important to note that during the Prophet's time, the religious education, imparted to new converts, included both the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. Although no school buildings were available in the beginning, the sessions were held in the mosques and private houses. Sources mention many seminars and lectures (majālis), and various select audience and circles (ḥalaqāt) where religious education known as 'ilm was given. 'Ilm, which, in those days, referred to every branch of religious education, namely the Qur'ān, ḥadīth, fiqh and tafsīr, necessarily implied the ḥadīth too, with which we are concerned at the moment. Thus we can say that ḥadīth was not only an informal matter among the companions and successors but was also taken seriously, and special sessions were held to teach it to at least some students. During these sessions (ḥalaga, pl. ḥalaqāt), it is highly probable that ahādīth were recorded in black and white. An inference to this effect can be drawn from the story told to us by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Ās<sup>1</sup>. This story can be attested by another similar report which says that Wāthila b. al-Asqa' (d. 83 A.H.), a companion, used to dictate ahādīth to his students at this early period.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See supra, pp. 214-215.

<sup>2</sup> Imlā', 13.; Mizān, iv, 145. no. 8658.; Tagyid, 99, n., citing Ibn Muflīh's Al-Adāb ash-Shar'iyya, ii, 125.



Furthermore, we find reference of the ḥadīth sessions of the companions like Ubayy b. Ka'b (d. 22 A.H.)<sup>1</sup>, 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 32 A.H.)<sup>2</sup>, 'Ubāda b. aṣ-Ṣāmit (d. 34 A.H.)<sup>3</sup>, 'Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn (d. 52 A.H.)<sup>4</sup>, Abū Hurayra (d. 59 A.H.)<sup>5</sup>, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ (d. 65 A.H.)<sup>6</sup>, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās (d. 68 A.H.)<sup>7</sup> and Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh (d. 78 A.H.)<sup>8</sup>, who were regularly imparting the knowledge of ḥadīth to their students.

Coming to the period of successors, we find mention of ḥadīth sessions of Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 93/94 A.H.)<sup>9</sup>, Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 102/103 A.H.)<sup>10</sup>, Makhūl ad-Dimashqī (d. 112 A.H.)<sup>11</sup> 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114 A.H.)<sup>12</sup>, and Nāfi', the freed slave of Ibn 'Umar (d. 117/119 A.H.)<sup>13</sup>

These hadith sessions and seminars had their precedent in the practice of the Prophet himself who used to teach the companions, sitting in a circle,<sup>14</sup> and who had fixed a particular day in a week to teach the women.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, III, ii, 61.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, III, i, 110.; III, ii, 61.

<sup>3</sup> Tarātīb, i, 48.; Papyri, ii, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Nubalā', ii, 433-434, 436, 440-441.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, II, i, 121-122.; VI, 79.; Kunā, ii, 126.; Bagh, i, 175.; Nubalā', iii, 235.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, ii, 43.

<sup>9</sup> Tab, V, 96, 98.

<sup>10</sup> Tab, V, 344.

<sup>11</sup> Kifāya, 385-387.

<sup>12</sup> Kifāya, 385.

<sup>13</sup> Kifāya, 385.; Imlā', 13.

<sup>14</sup> SB, i, 27-28 ('Ilm).

<sup>15</sup> SB, i, 38 ('Ilm).

The fact that the companions and successors who used to hold special sessions are considered as authorities on ḥadīth makes us believe that either they themselves had possessed written traditions to relate to their students, or if they used to narrate or dictate through memory, their students must have written them down. The mention of sahīfa and books in their names and in the names of their students provide further proof that a large number of ahādīth were written down during these sessions.

(viii) Deliberate recording for posterity: large collections:-

Apart from informal recordings mentioned above, ahādīth seem to have been collected deliberately as well. The companions like ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. Al-‘Āṣ, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās and Anas b. Mālik wrote traditions, perhaps from academic points of view. To this list of serious ḥadīth collectors may be added the names of ‘Amr b. Ḥazm al-Anṣārī (d. 51/53 A.H.), Abū ‘l-Yasar Ka‘b b. ‘Amr (d. 55 A.H.), Masrūq b. al-Ajda‘ (d. 63 A.H.) and ‘Amr b. Maymūn al-Awdī (d. 74 A.H.), all of whom seem to have collected the traditions in scholarly interest. These traditions are reported to have been collected in sahīfa, daftar, majalla, ṣikāk and nuskha etc. Although we do not know the exact size of these collections, yet it is highly probable that some of them were large enough to be called volumes and books.

### 3. Conclusion:

We have seen in the preceeding paragraphs that the preservation of traditions was not dependent on memory alone. They were, on the contrary, recorded in black and white, to be later assimilated into corpus of traditions. Although no formal arrangement was made to record the traditions, the companions, influenced by the dynamic personality of the Prophet and recognising the importance of the Prophet's sunna - stressed in the Qur‘an and by the Prophet himself - preserved on their own initiative, a complete record of Muhammad's sayings, actions and his silent approvals.

## CHAPTER FIVE

THE EARLY RECORDS1.- Introductory - Receptacles of ḥadīth:-

It is generally believed that the traditions remained in peoples' memory for a period of at least one hundred years after the death of the Prophet and that it began to be recorded only after the lapse of a century. As to the exact year in which the task was undertaken opinions differ. According to one report "the writing did not take place until after the death of Ibn al-Musayyib (d.105 A.H.) and pious successors."<sup>1</sup> Then it is said, "The first person to put into writing and compile ḥadīth was Ibn Shihāb az Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.)."<sup>2</sup> In the words of Dhahabī "The traditions were compiled in 132 A.H."<sup>3</sup> Again, it is said that those who wrote books belong to the period after 120 A.H.<sup>4</sup> In Ibn Hajar's opinion "the traditions of the Prophet were not compiled and arranged in books until the time of the companions and older successors."<sup>5</sup> Jāḥiẓ, in his Rasā'il, comments that if the generation that collected the Qur'ān in book-form had made a written collection of the Prophet's traditions, no one in his (Jāḥiẓ's) time would have been able to question their authenticity.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, a recent Indian authror, Ḥasan Ṣiddīq Khān says that the companions and the successors were not in need of compiling 'ilm ash-Sharā'i wa 'l-aḥkām i.e. the traditional material.'<sup>7</sup> Following him, al-Kattānī

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<sup>1</sup> Qūt, i, 159.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 73, 76.; Safwat, ii, 78.; Tahdīth, 46.; Khiṭaṭ, ii, 333.

<sup>3</sup> Nujūm, i, 351;

<sup>4</sup> Qūt, i, 159; Khulafā', 261.; Nujūm, i, 351.; Zunūn, i, 26.

<sup>5</sup> Fath (Intr.), i, 17; Fath, i, 218.

<sup>6</sup> Fayyri, i, 8, n.2, citing Jāḥiẓ's Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ, (Cairo, 1352/1933), pp. 119-123.

<sup>7</sup> Abjad, 110.

remarked, "The companions and the successors wrote no ahādīth save that of Kitāb as-sadāqa and few more treatises which can be traced only after research."<sup>1</sup> Finally, a contemporary scholar, Abū Rayya says, "The task of the compilation of sunan commenced for the first time between the years 120-150 A.H."<sup>2</sup>

The Western Scholars hold the same views and trace the earliest recording of ḥadīth to the beginning of the second century A.H. While Wensinck says that the large mass of materials contained in the canonical collections...covers a period reaching no farther than the beginning of the second century.<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lewis remarks, "The collection and recording of Ḥadīth did not take place until several generations after the death of the Prophet."<sup>4</sup> Whereas Lewis only impliedly refers to the period after 120 A.H. in the above statement, Guillaume is definite in his research when he says, "The compilation of the canonical collection dates from the time when the Abbasids were firmly in the saddle"<sup>5</sup> i.e., after 132 A.H.

Another scholar, Petersen, in his recent work "Alī and Mu'āwiya", says that 'the transmission (of ḥadīth) is, to all appearances, set down in writing as early as in the late Umayyad age.'<sup>6</sup> As regards the independent books, he remarks that they belong to the early Abbasid period. Although he mentioned among those books only historical works, this, according to him, is also the period in which ḥadīth books were

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<sup>1</sup> Mustatrifa, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Adwā', 226.

<sup>3</sup> Creed, 59.

<sup>4</sup> Arabs in History, 36.

<sup>5</sup> Traditions, 37.

<sup>6</sup> Alī and Mu'āwiya, 178.

compiled. He says, "Not much later...records, Kutub (sing. Kitāb), which deal monographically with Akhbār, make their appearance."<sup>1</sup>

He adds, "The title indexes in the bibliographical literature - Akhbār Ṣiffīn, Kitāb an-Naharwān, Kitāb al-Karbalā, etc., afford circumstantial evidence that the written monograph or pamphlet was the normal mode of expression from the middle of the 8th century..."<sup>2</sup>

But contrary to these views we find reports indicating that the traditions used to be recorded right from the time of the Prophet. While Margoliouth only guesses that 'some of his (Prophet's) correspondence might have been dictated by the Prophet'<sup>3</sup>, Macdonald is pretty certain of 'some such Boswells among the Prophet's companions who fixed his words as they fell'.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, whereas Muir with utmost scepticism says that 'some of Mahomet's sayings may possibly have been noted down in writing during his lifetime, and from that source copied and propagated afterwards'<sup>5</sup>, Sprenger's researches have very clearly shown that such a practice did in fact exist in the Prophet's lifetime and immediately thereafter.<sup>6</sup> Again, whereas Horovitz believes in the genuineness of the ṣahīfas of the Followers (Successors) only<sup>7</sup>, Goldziher mentions more than a dozen ṣahīfas of the Companions and considers most of them as genuine.<sup>8</sup> Sprenger even names three eminent companions viz Anas b. Mālik, Ibn 'Abbās and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ as recorders of

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<sup>1</sup> Alī and Mu'āwiya, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Alī and Mu'āwiya, 17-18.

<sup>3</sup> Mohammed, 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> Muslim Theology, 75.

<sup>5</sup> Mahomet, i, p. xxxii.

<sup>6</sup> "Origin of writing...", JASB, xxv, 303-329, 375-381.

<sup>7</sup> He says, "If the data for the Aḥādīth of a number of the companions of the Prophet recorded on leaves (Ṣahā'if) or in books (Kutub) is partly of uncertain worth, still there can be no doubt that such written records were no longer a rarity in the generation of the Ṭabī'ūn, who derived this knowledge from the companions." cf. "Earliest biographies...", IC, i, 536.

<sup>8</sup> Est, ii, 9-11/22-24.

the Prophet's traditions in private note books.<sup>1</sup>

The above named three, along with the fourth, Abū Hurayra, have hitherto been considered the most prominent ḥadīth collectors of the Prophet's time. But recently Nabia Abbott, in her monumental ḥadīth work, has not only doubled this figure, bringing the total number of these collectors to eight<sup>2</sup>, but brought to light many other names of ḥadīth writers. In this work she further established that the written records of these eight along with many other less well-known companions were transmitted, both orally and in writing, to next succeeding generation which in its turn passed on this heritage to its own successors. This practice, she adds, continued until the whole material was assimilated in major ḥadīth works.<sup>3</sup>

As for the general erroneous belief that ḥadīth was mainly oral at least for one hundred years<sup>4</sup>, and that the first collection of ḥadīth was made by Zuhri (d. 124)<sup>5</sup>, we have already shown<sup>6</sup> that such a theory was based on certain misconceptions and hence untenable. The fact is that the recording of ḥadīth and sunna, though informally, had started right from the Prophet's time. As regards its transmission, it had all along been both oral and written - the available materials of one generation being passed on, both orally and in written form to the succeeding generation until its final incorporation in the classical corpus of ḥadīth.

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<sup>1</sup> "Origin of writing...", JASB, XXV, 360.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, ii, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, ii, 39-40.

<sup>4</sup> Adwā', 207; Qūt, i, 159; Muhaddithūn, 127; Fajr, 221; Tahdīth, 45-46; Fath (Intr.), i, 17.; Tdh, i, 151.; Fath, i, 218.; Khiṭaṭ, ii, 333.; Zunūn, i, 637.; As-Sunna (Sib), 40.; Manār, x, 768.; Literary History, 144.; Taqyid (Intr.), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, i, 73.; Tahdīth, 46.; Safwat, ii, 78.

<sup>6</sup> See Supra, Chapter IV.



That the traditions used to be recorded right from the time of the Prophet can be proved by referring to the literary activities and actual written records - as mentioned in the available sources - of the companions, the successors and the Followers of the Successors. But before we deal with these early records, it is important to stress that to deny the very existence of the practice of ḥadīth writing during the Prophet's and the companions' period is one thing and to deny the survival of such a record to present day is entirely a different matter. As for the former, it has been almost unanimously<sup>1</sup> admitted that such a practice did exist and Goldziher has referred to few such written records of this period.<sup>2</sup> The controversy lies only in the latter case. While the Muslim scholars, with the exception of a few, generally believe in its survival and consider the present ḥadīth collections as genuine and actual records of the Prophet's actions and sayings, the Western Orientalists have reached the conclusion that not a single tradition in the present classical works can be proved to be the genuine record of the Prophet's behaviour. Muir, for instance, holds, "We cannot with confidence, or even with the least show of likelihood, affirm of any tradition that it was recorded till nearly the end of the first century of the Hegira."<sup>3</sup> Schacht asserted that traditions never went back to the Prophet. In his words, "Generally and broadly speaking, traditions from companions and successors are earlier than those from the Prophet."<sup>4</sup> In the opinion of Goldziher, the tradition literature is a record of religious, political and social development of early Islam.<sup>5</sup> By this

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<sup>1</sup> W. Muir, however, is an exception, who says, "there was in reality no such practice." cf. Mahomet, i, p. xxxv.

<sup>2</sup> Mst., ii, 9-11/22-24.

<sup>3</sup> Mahomet, i, p. xxxv.

<sup>4</sup> OmJ, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Mst, ii, 5/19. "



he meant that no earlier record has survived to this day.

The basis of such scepticism about the authenticity of the Prophet's ḥadīth by Western scholars was probably the non-existence of any original ḥadīth collection whatsoever. But with the discovery of Ṣaḥīfa of Hammām b. Munabbih<sup>1</sup> and many ḥadīth papyri<sup>2</sup>, the Western views have been slightly modified. Thus the contemporary scholar, James Robson, not only agrees with Horovitz in maintaining that some men made small collections for their own use<sup>3</sup> but goes a step further and says, "The material they (collections) contained was incorporated in later works."<sup>4</sup> And Nabia Abbott, having found in classical ḥadīth collections several parallels of the traditions contained in his edited papyri, reached the following conclusion: "A number of records were begun in the time of Muḥammad, and many others reached completion as a result of the literary activities of Zuhri and his pupils and numerous other scholars of their time. Thereafter, these materials were preserved continuously in writing, with or without editorial touches..."<sup>5</sup>

The discovery of Hammām's Ṣaḥīfa and papyrus documents has provided enough testimony to the veracity of present ḥadīth collections. It also suggests that the practice of ḥadīth writing was in existence from the earliest times. This can be evidenced by referring to the written records of each generation commencing from the Prophet's own time.

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, xi, 27; Ḥamidullah (ed.), Ṣaḥīfa Hammām b. Munabbih, Damascus, 1372/1953.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, i, 32-33, 38-40, 57-58, 61-62, 65-67, 80-81, 100-101, 109-110.; ii, 92-94, 114-115, 129-132, 146-147, 158-159, 166-168, 185-187, 199-201, 208-209, 222-224, 237-238, 246-248, 262-263, 269-271, and other edited papyri.

<sup>3</sup> "Earliest biographies...", IC, i, 536.

<sup>4</sup> Mishkāṭ, i, p. iii.

<sup>5</sup> Papyri, ii, 82, citing Tdh, i, 97-101, 150-151.

It is essential to point out that the sources, while dealing with the literary activities of pre-classical period, generally refer to the authors, rather than to works<sup>1</sup> - a point overlooked by W. Muir who doubts the existence of early records on the ground that 'their nature and contents thereof were not mentioned.'<sup>2</sup> In fact the method of referring to authors rather than to books was not confined to ḥadīth literature alone; the practice was generally in vogue in other literatures as well. Khaṭīb Baghdādī, for instance, quotes from the book 'Tabaḥāt' of Khalīfa b. Khayyāt but refers to the author.<sup>3</sup>

Before dealing with the literary activities of individual ḥadīth scholars and ḥadīth recording as such, it is necessary to explain the meaning and significance of various terms used as receptacles of traditional material. Apart from the term ṣaḥīfa, discussed earlier,<sup>4</sup> there were many others which connoted different meanings in different contexts. As their exact connotation was not fixed, no specific meaning could be attached to a particular term. Thus the same word was used to denote varying sizes of ḥadīth collections, as, for instance, the word kitāb could mean both a 'book-size manuscript' or a 'monograph' or even a 'letter which contained just one ḥadīth'. It is only the context which helps ascertain the exact connotation, though at times it is also not helpful.

In addition to the words ṣaḥīfa and kitāb, many other similar terms like kurrāsa, nuskha and juz', etc. have found currency in

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, i, 24.; "Origin of writing..." JASB, xxv, 1856, p. 381.; Manuscript, 198.

<sup>2</sup> Mahomet, i, pp., xxxiii - xxxiv.

<sup>3</sup> Bagh, x, 401.

<sup>4</sup> See Supra, Chapter IV, pp. 208-228.

ḥadīth literature. We take up each of these terms separately to discuss their meanings and usages.

(i) Kitāb and Ṣaḥīfa:- The term ṣaḥīfa, as receptacle of ḥadīth, has been fully dealt with in the preceding chapter<sup>1</sup>. As regards the term 'kitāb', its meanings and usages were as under:

Literally speaking the infinitive (masdar) 'katb' means 'to collect'<sup>2</sup> and the term kitāb denotes the agglomeration of alphabets. "Just as a group of horses is called a katība", says Qalqashandī, "the group of alphabets grouped together in a piece of writing came to be known as kitāba."<sup>3</sup> In this sense, therefore, any written material will be called a kitāb.

However, the word is generally used in two basic senses: (i) a letter, both private and official, and (ii) a book which includes a pamphlet, a memorandum and a monograph.

To take a few examples, the letter handed over to ʿArafā and Muʿtammis by ʿAmr b. Hind<sup>4</sup>, the letter sent by Ḥaṭīb b. Abī Balṭaʿa to Quraysh informing them about the Prophet's intention to attack the Meccans<sup>5</sup>, the confidential letter sent by the Prophet to Suhayl b. ʿAmr<sup>6</sup>, The Prophet's letter to Abū Buṣayr allowing the latter to return to Medina<sup>7</sup>, Buṣayr b. Zuhayr's letter to his brother Kaʿb b. Zuhayr, telling him of the fate of Meccans who were executed by the Prophet on account of their satirical verses against him<sup>8</sup>, the letter of the Ghassanide chief to Kaʿb b. Mālik inducing the latter to leave the

<sup>1</sup> See supra, chapter IV, pp.208-228.

<sup>2</sup> Nihāya, vii, 1.; Ṣubḥ, i, 32-33; Mufaḍ, i, 715.

<sup>3</sup> Ṣubḥ, i, 32-33.

<sup>4</sup> Agh (Rudolph) xxi, 194-195.; SAD, ii, 157 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1629.

<sup>5</sup> Sīra, 809; Tab, II, i, 97;

<sup>6</sup> Akhbār, ii, 40.

<sup>7</sup> Sīra, 752-753.

<sup>8</sup> Sīra, 887.

Prophet and join him as a protest against the Prophet's unfriendly attitude<sup>1</sup> towards Ka'b<sup>2</sup>, and the sealed letter given to 'Abd Allāh b. Jahsh by the Prophet asking the former not to open it until after two days' journey<sup>3</sup>, have all been referred to in the sources as 'kitāb'.

The Qur'ān also uses the word kitāb in the sense of letter. In connection with the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sabā', Sulaymān is quoted as saying idhhab bikitābī hādha fa'lqiḥ ilayhim (Go thou with this letter of mine, and deliver it to them), and when the letter reached the queen, she addressed her chiefs thus: Yā ayyuhā 'l mala'u innī ulciya ilayya kitābun karīmun (Ye, chiefs, here is, delivered to me, a letter worthy of respect)<sup>4</sup>.

Apart from private letters, the official letters of political nature like the charters of amnesty and the letters of proselytism were also known in pre and early Islam as kitāb. To take for instance it is reported that Nu'mān had given a letter of amnesty to Ḥārith b. Zālim<sup>5</sup> in pre-Islamic times, while Surāqa b. Mālik was awarded a similar letter of amnesty during the Prophet's migration to Medina.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As a result of Ka'b's non-participation in the battle of Tabūk, the Prophet had not only himself severed all connections with him but had ordered other muslims as well to do likewise. Consequently, all the muslim population of Medina refrained from talking to Ka'b. This, however, was only a temporary social boycott, for after severe penance he was forgiven by God and thus received the Prophet's forgiveness as well. (cf. Qur'ān, ix:102, 117, 118, and commentaries thereon.)

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 911.; Tafsīr, xiv, 552-553.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 447. Sīra, 423-424.; Annales, i, 1273-1274.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 27: 28,29.; Ḥayawān, i, 97.

<sup>5</sup> Agh, xi, 120.

<sup>6</sup> Sīra, 332.; Mushnad, iv, 176.

So far as the second type of letters are concerned, it is mentioned in the sources that the Prophet had written many such letters to the neighbouring chiefs and also to great powers of the world inviting them therein to embrace Islam.<sup>1</sup> All these letters have been referred to as 'kitāb'.

Coming to the second meaning of the term kitāb, namely a 'book', it should be emphasised that the word in this sense has been very widely used. It included in its scope a charter, a treaty, a contract, a monograph, a booklet and a proper book-size manuscript. The exact meaning could be ascertained only with reference to the context. Although in many cases the context helped to determine whether the term referred to a book proper or merely a note-book, yet in most cases the meaning remained ambiguous. This ambiguity in the meaning of kitāb (and of ṣahīfa, as we have seen earlier)<sup>2</sup> has led some scholars to interpret the word in its diminutive sense and to formulate the theory that the early muḥaddithūn had only small written records. This conclusion has been reached by interpreting the word kitāb in one particular sense consistently, despite the fact that the word has been used in different senses in different contexts as we shall see presently.

To begin with, the term applies to documents covering a space of only a few sheets. For example the tribal agreements, contracts and treaties, the circulars containing legal and administrative matters and so on. Thus the document boycotting the Prophet and his family<sup>3</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, I, ii, 15-38, et passim.

<sup>2</sup> See Supra, Chapter IV, pp. 208-228,

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, i, 139-140.; Annales, i, 1189.

the treaty of Ḥudaybiya,<sup>1</sup> the grants of land by Charters to different individuals by the Prophet<sup>2</sup>, the letter, sent to the people of Yemen, containing rules of zakāt etc.<sup>3</sup>, the letter, sent to ‘Amr b. Ḥazm, containing laws regarding blood money etc.<sup>4</sup>, the letter, sent to ‘Alā’ b. al-Ḥaḍramī, containing rules about Zakāt of animals<sup>5</sup>, the mukātaba<sup>6</sup> contract between Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī and his slave Aflaḥ<sup>7</sup>, the grant of certain privileges, in writing, by the Prophet to various people<sup>8</sup>, the pact contracted between the tribe of Khuzā’a and ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim<sup>9</sup>, the pact between the Prophet and the people of Ghatafan<sup>10</sup>, the written contract between the Prophet and al-‘Addā’ b. Khālīd b. Hawdha<sup>11</sup>, the Prophet's letters, sent to various tribes, containing laws like ṣadaqāt and other such matters<sup>12</sup>, the peace-treaty between Banū Ḍamra and the Muslims<sup>13</sup>, the constitution of Medina<sup>14</sup>, Abū Bakr's circular - with the Prophet's seal - sent to Anas b. Mālīk which contained laws regarding alms<sup>15</sup>, the testamentary endowment of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz by which he donated a house at Mecca for pilgrims<sup>16</sup>, and many more such written documents have been described in the sources as ‘kitāb’.

<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 747, 748; Ṭab, II, i, 73, 74.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. grant of land to Zayd al-Khayr. (cf. Sīra, 946-947.; Ṭab., I, ii, 59.)

<sup>3</sup> Ṭab., I, ii, 19-20; V, 386-387.; Sīra, 955-957.

<sup>4</sup> Ikhtilāf, 17-18.; Sīra, 961-962. Wathā’iq, no. 105.; SN, viii, 58-60 (Qasāma). Muwatta’a, iv, 175-176 (‘Uqūl).; Annales, i, 1727-1729.

<sup>5</sup> Ṭab., I, ii, 19; IV, ii, 76.

<sup>6</sup> Setting free of slaves on conditions stipulated in the written document.

<sup>7</sup> Ṭab, V, 62.

<sup>8</sup> e.g. the Kitāb for Wā’il b. Hujr al-Ḥaḍramī (cf. Ṭab, I, ii, 35), for Azraq b. ‘Amr (cf. Akhbār, ii, 200), for Bāriq (cf. Ṭab, I, ii, 35) and for ‘Addā’ (cf. Ṭab, VII, ii, 35).

<sup>9</sup> Wathā’iq, no. 171; Annales, i, 1088.

<sup>10</sup> Sīra, 676; Annales, i, 1474.

<sup>11</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 36.

<sup>12</sup> e.g. the letters given to Muṭarrif b. al-Kāhin al-Bāhilī (cf. Ṭab,

After reading about the contents of the above documents one easily reaches the conclusion that they must have covered a space of one to four and five sheets at the most. And since they were known as kitāb, it can be safely concluded that kitāb, like ṣahīfa, in early Islam meant a written document covering a space of only a few pages. The word may, therefore, be rendered as a pamphlet or a memorandum as maintained by Goldziher and others.

But to translate the word in the above sense consistently would not be correct, for it also refers to the document of relatively larger size, as, for instance the book size manuscripts. The Qur'ān, taken in its entirety, is itself referred to as 'Kitāb'.<sup>1</sup>

In pre-Islamic Arabia, the dawāwīn (collection of poems) of tribal poets, usually large ones, were known as kitāb. To take a few examples, the collection of poems of each of the tribes of Fazāra<sup>2</sup>, Banī Yashkur<sup>3</sup>, Banī 'Uqayl<sup>4</sup>, Banī Asad<sup>5</sup>, Tayy<sup>6</sup> and Banī Salīm<sup>7</sup> have all

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I, ii, 33, 49.; Nihāya, xviii, 50.), to Nahshal b. Mālik al-Wā'ilī (cf. Ṭab, I, ii, 33.; Nihāya, xviii, 50) and to the tribe of Aslam residing at Sahl and Sayf (cf. Ṭab, I, ii, 82.)

<sup>13</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 159, citing Suhaylī, Ar-Rawḍ al-Unf, ii, 58-59.

<sup>14</sup> Sīra, 341-344; Wathā'iq, no. 1; Magh, 177.

<sup>15</sup> Ṭaqyīd, 87.; Musnad, i, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Akhbār, ii, 194.

Footnotes of this page:

<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 1:1; 6:92; 10:1; 11:6; 12:1; 13:1; 15:1; 26:1; 28:2; 29:45, 47; 31:1; 41:41., et passim.

<sup>2</sup> Mu'talif, 65, 76.

<sup>3</sup> Mu'talif, 186.

<sup>4</sup> Mu'talif, 118.

<sup>5</sup> Mu'talif, 34.

<sup>6</sup> Mu'talif, 148.

<sup>7</sup> Mu'talif, 176.



been described as 'kitāb'. These anthologies containing collections of poems of not only individual poets but a group of them, belonging to certain tribes, must have been large enough. And the fact that they were called 'kitāb' indicates that the term referred not only to memorandum notes but also to large size manuscripts.

Another category of literary product known as 'kitāb' was the religious and wisdom literature of pre-Islamic period. The Qur'ān calls the Torah and Bible as kitāb<sup>1</sup>, and the followers of these scriptures as ahl al-kitāb<sup>2</sup> (the people of the book). Apart from Moses and Jesus Christ, to whom these books are respectively ascribed<sup>3</sup>, the Qur'ān also credits other prophets (though without specifying names) with scriptures known as 'kitāb'<sup>4</sup>.

In the early times, the words of wisdom and wise sayings were preserved in writing.<sup>5</sup> The usual term majalla, which contained such material, often interchanged with the word kitāb, as is confirmed by the Prophet's remark, "With the Arabs every 'kitāb' is a 'majalla'."<sup>6</sup>

The appellation of the word 'kitāb' for the Qur'ān, the Torah, the Bible and the wisdom literature, suggests that it applied to fairly large-size books. Although it cannot be said with certainty whether old and New Testaments were compiled in pre-Islamic times, it is clear that

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 2:78, 79.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 3:110; 4:153; 5:15, 68; 29:46; 57:29.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 2:87; 17:2; 23:49; 25:35; 46:12.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'ān, 5:48; 29:27; 43:21.

<sup>5</sup> Mst, ii, 9/22.

<sup>6</sup> Nihāya (Ath), i, 201.

when the Qur'ān refers to these scriptures by the term kitāb, it means the 'book' as a whole and not its portions.<sup>1</sup> It seems, therefore, that the word kitāb in early times was used for a booksize manuscript also.

Although no wisdom literature of early times has survived to this day, the aphorisms ascribed to Aktham ibn Ṣayfī<sup>2</sup>, Luqmān<sup>3</sup> and other Hukamā' 'l-'Arab<sup>4</sup> (the wise men of Arabia) suggest the possibility of large collections of wise sayings in books, known as ṣahīfa or kitāb. This could be rightly expected in a society which possessed the records of its tribal poets and genealogical tables of its ancestors.

In the light of the above observation we can say that the word kitāb was used in a very wide sense. It meant not only a letter, a pamphlet or a booklet but was applied to large size books as well. In short, "the word kitāb", says Abbott, "was used to mean anything written, from a letter or receipt to a note book, pamphlet, or book, including the Book or Qur'ān."<sup>5</sup>

Having discussed the literal meaning of the word kitāb, let us now see its use in ḥadīth literature. A probe into the vast available material on the subject reveals that the word has been used in all the senses noted above. While sometimes it referred to a letter containing one or few ahādīth of the Prophet, on other occasions it was applied to a small collection of ḥadīth, and not infrequently did it refer to large ḥadīth collection of a certain scholar. We give below the examples of

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 6:155.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, ii, 160; Papyri, ii, 7, citing Ṭurṭūshī, Sirāj al-Mulūk (Cairo, 1306/1888), p. 157, where the author refers to several compositions covering Aktham's wisdom.

<sup>3</sup> Sīra, 285; Bayān, i, 106-107.; Hilya, ii, 283, vi, 320.

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, i, 57, 59.; Papyri, ii, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Papyri, i, 23.

each case to show that the word cannot be consistently interpreted in one particular sense.

(a) Kitāb in the sense of 'letter'

(i) It is reported that the Prophet wrote to the people of yemen a kitāb (kataba...bikitābin) which contained the following: 'The gravest sin in the eyes of God on the Day of Judgement will be the polytheism, the killing of a Muslim unjustly, the fleeing from the way of Allāh during war and disobedience of parents.'<sup>1</sup>

(ii) When Nahshal b. Mālik al-Wā'ilī called on the Prophet and embraced Islam, the Prophet is reported to have written down for him and for other converted members of his tribe a kitāb which contained the laws of Islam (Sharā'i' al-Islām).<sup>2</sup>

(iii) It is reported that the Prophet (in a kitāb) wrote for al-'Alā' b. al-Ḥaḍramī the laws regarding zakāt on camels, cows, sheep, fruits and merchandise<sup>3</sup>. The latter is said to have read out the former's letter (kitābahū) to the people of Baḥrayn and received the taxes from them on the basis of the provisions contained in the letter.<sup>4</sup>

(iv) Abū Bakr b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith relates: "Abū Rāfi' (the servant of the Prophet) handed me a kitāb which contained the Prophet's method of commencing the prayer (fīhi istiftāḥ aṣ-ṣalāt)."<sup>5</sup>

It is abundantly clear that the word kitāb in all the examples cited above has been used in the sense of a 'letter' which contained the Prophet's ḥadīth.

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<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 173.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, I, ii, 33.; Mihāya, xviii, 50.

<sup>3</sup> Ṭab, I, ii, 19.; iv, ii, 76.

<sup>4</sup> Ṭab, I, ii, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 472.

(b) Kitāb in the sense of 'booklet':-

The word kitāb was also used in the sense of a booklet, as appears from the following examples:

(i) It is reported that once a kitāb containing the legal decisions of 'Alī was brought to 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās.<sup>1</sup>

In view of 'Alī's preoccupation with multifarious political engagements especially his active participation in the 'battle of Camel' and the 'war of Ṣiffīn' it can be said that he could not have found much time to give rulings on such large number of legal cases which might form a sizeable book. The kitāb referred to in the above report could not, therefore, be but only a small collection of his juristic rulings.

(ii) 'Amr b. Ḥazm (d. 51/53 A.H.), who was appointed the governor of Najrān, is reported to have possessed a kitāb which contained among other things, the rules regarding times and methods of prayer, ablution, booty, taxation and blood money.<sup>2</sup> On the basis of the reported contents of this kitāb, one can very well infer that it must have been a small pamphlet containing few ahādīth of the Prophet.

(iii) That the word kitāb indicated a note book is clearly evident in the following statement of Mu'tamar: He says, "While I was at Kūfa, my father [Sulaymān b. Tarkhān, (d. 143 A.H.)] wrote to me: 'Buy kutub (plural of kitāb) and write down knowledge i.e. ḥadīth'.<sup>3</sup>

(iv) Anas b. Mālik (d. 91 A.H.) is reported to have possessed a kitāb containing the rules of zakāt which Abū Bakr had dictated to him. The opening sentence of the kitāb read: 'It contains the laws of sadaqa as prescribed by the messenger of Allāh upon the Muslim'.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> SM, i, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Jarḥ, III, i, 224-225; Wathā'iq, no. 105.; Sīra, 961-962; Annales, i, 1727-1729.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 112.; Bayān, i, 58.; Fāsil, 35b, with the variant 'ṣuḥuf', the synonym of 'Kutub'.

<sup>4</sup> SAD, ii, 129-130 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1567.; SIM, i, 551 (Zakāt).; Taqyīd, 87.

word Kitāb in this report too indicates that it referred to a 'booklet'.

(v) It is reported that Thumāma b. 'Abd Allāh b. Anas possessed a kitāb which he transmitted to Ḥammād b. Salama.<sup>1</sup> This report as such gives no indication of the size of the above kitāb. Had we not known that it was in fact the same manuscript which Anas b. Mālik, his grandfather, had received from Abū Bakr when the latter appointed him to administer the ṣadaqāt in Baḥrayn<sup>2</sup>, we might have translated the word 'kitāb' either as a large size book or simply a pamphlet. But in the presence of sufficient evidence in support of the above information we can, with certainty, restrict the meaning of 'kitāb' to merely a booklet, for the document in question contained only laws of zakāt. Thus the term used in this report would be rendered as 'a monograph' dealing with taxation.

It is interesting to point out in this connection that the use of the term 'kitāb' in the sense of 'booklet' in early Islam was not restricted to ḥadīth documents alone. It also referred to those containing political and historical matters. For example, the deed of arbitration between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya has been described in the sources as kitāb<sup>3</sup>, though sometimes alternated with a similar term, ṣahīfa.<sup>4</sup> To take another example, the document found in the family of Abū 'Amr b. Ḥurayth al-'Udhari, which dealt with a twelve man delegation calling on the Prophet in 9 A.H., was also known as kitāb<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 473.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 87-89; SB, i, 366-369 (Zakāt).

<sup>3</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 372.; Tiwāl, 195, 196.; Annales, i, 3336, 3338.

<sup>4</sup> Annales, i, 3336-3338.; Tiwāl, 197.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 66.

(c) Kitāb in the sense of 'book':-

Now we turn to the third meaning of the word 'kitāb', namely a proper book-size manuscript. A number of examples can be cited where the term has been used in this sense. We give here three examples:

(i) of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, an assiduous collector of ḥadīth, it is reported that at an advanced age when his eyes failed him, people used to read his kutub to him.<sup>1</sup> The word kutub, the plural of kitāb, used in this report, means nothing but proper books. This interpretation is quite logical in view of the fact that he had wholly devoted himself to the pursuit of knowledge and is reported to have left a large number of manuscripts.<sup>2</sup>

(ii) Bashīr b. Nahīk's collection of Abū Hurayra's transmitted ahādīth is mentioned in the sources as a 'kitāb'.<sup>3</sup> It is said that Bashīr, who used to record the traditions narrated by his teacher, Abū Hurayra, brought the whole written material to the latter and obtained his permission to transmit the traditions contained in that 'kitāb'.<sup>4</sup>

In view of Abū Hurayra's reputation as the one who had reported the largest number of ahādīth, Bashīr's kitāb containing the former's transmission can be safely regarded as fairly large size book.

(iii) The large ḥadīth collections of 'Abīda b. Qays (d. 72),<sup>5</sup> Abū Qilāba (d. 104),<sup>6</sup> Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160)<sup>7</sup> and many more

<sup>1</sup> Nubalā', iii, 238.; Kifāya, 384.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, V, 216.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 399.; Ṭab, VII, i, 162.; Taqyīd, 101.; Tahdh, i, 470.; Fāsil, 63b; ʿIlm, 11a.

<sup>4</sup> Kifāya, 411.; Ṭab, VII, i, 162.; Taqyīd, 101.; Tahdh, i, 470.; Fāsil, 63b.; ʿIlm, 11b.

<sup>5</sup> Ṭab, VI, 63.; Taqyīd, 45, 61.; Bayān, i, 67.; ʿIlm, 9b.

<sup>6</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 135.; VII, ii, 17.; Fāsil, 51a.

<sup>7</sup> Taqyīd, 62.

manuscripts reported to have been destroyed in one way or the other, and which have been described in the sources as Kutub, may also be rendered as book-size manuscripts in view of the fact that their compilers were insatiable collectors of ḥadīth.

It should be noted here that the plural Kutub, when spoken of the entire collection of a particular scholar, includes not only the proper books but also other written materials. The word in this case conveys all the three meanings of 'Kitāb', mentioned above. Thus the huge collections of Ibn 'Abbās,<sup>1</sup> Abū Qilāba<sup>2</sup> and Sufyān ath-Thawrī<sup>3</sup>, mentioned in the sources as Kutub, comprised not only their proper books in which they had collected ahādīth, but all the booklets, monographs and other written material in their possession.

To sum up, the word Kitāb (pl. Kutub) has been used in different senses in different contexts. Sometimes the context tells us which of the various possible meanings is intended, but at times the meaning remains ambiguous. Used in connection with ḥadīth manuscripts, the word indicates both small and large collection of traditions of a particular traditionist. The plural Kutub generally indicates 'books'. But when it is spoken of an entire collection of a scholar, it refers not only to his books, but also to his rough drafts, his booklets, pamphlets and

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<sup>1</sup> His entire collection is described as ḥiml ba'īr min kutub Ibn 'Abbās i.e. a camel load of Ibn 'Abbās' books. (cf. Ṭab, V, 216.; Tagyīd, 136.; Shadh, i, 114.)

<sup>2</sup> of his entire collection it is said that when after his death it (Kutubihī) reached to his trustee, Ayyūb as-Sikhtiyānī, the latter had to pay about fourteen dirhams for the carriage. (cf. Ṭab, VII, ii, 17.; Fāsil, 51a.)

<sup>3</sup> His collection of books (Kutubuhū) has been described as nine heaps (tis' qimtarāt), each of which reaching in height the chest of a man. (cf. Bagh, ix, 161.)



other written material in his possession.

(ii) Nuskha:-

The term nuskha, like kitāb, generally refers to book, whether large or small. Khaṭīb Baghdādī uses it in this sense when he says that (ḥadīth) scholars possess many famous nuskhas, each of which contain ahādīth.<sup>1</sup> Although we come across a number of ḥadīth collections known as nuskha<sup>2</sup>, yet scarcely are we told about their exact size.

<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 321.

<sup>2</sup> Some of them are as follows:

1. Nuskah of 'Aqba b. Abū 'l-Ḥasnā', containing the ahādīth transmitted by Abū Hurayra (cf. Mizān, iii, 85, no. 5685.)
2. Nuskha of Ibrāhīm b. Hudba, containing the ahādīth transmitted by Anas b. Mālik. (cf. Ma'rifat, 9.)
3. Nuskha of Muṭarrif b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, containing the ahādīth transmitted by Hibbān b. Jazī as-Sulamī. (cf. Jarḥ, I, ii, 268.)
4. Nuskha of 'Abd al-Ḥamid b. Bahrām, containing the traditions transmitted by Shahr b. Ḥawshab (d. 100 A.H.). (cf. Bagh, xi, 59.)
5. Nuskha in possession of Al-Awzā'ī, containing the ahādīth transmitted by Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110 A.H.). (cf. Tahdh, vi, 240.)
6. Nuskha of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Namira al-Yahshubī, containing the ahādīth transmitted by Zuhri (d. 124). (cf. Tahdh, vi, 287-288.)
7. Nuskha of Ibrāhīm b. Ṭahmān, containing the traditions transmitted by Muḥammad b. Ziyād al-Qurashī (d. c. 125 A.H.) (cf. Ma'rifat, 164.)
8. Nuskha of Layth b. Sa'd, containing the ahādīth transmitted by Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb (d. 128 A.H.). (cf. Mizān, i, 636, no. 2447.)
9. Nuskhas of Abū Ḥamza as-Sukkari (cf. Ma'rifat, 164), Mubārak b. Suhaym (cf. Mizān, iii, 430, no. 7042.), 'Abd Allāh b. Jarrāh (cf. Ma'rifat, 164), Ḥusayn b. al-Walid (cf. Ma'rifat, 165), 'Uthmān al-Marwazi (cf. Ma'rifat, 164.), 'Abd ar-Razzāq b. Humām (cf. Kifāya, 321.), 'Adī b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān (cf. Jarḥ, III, ii, 3.) and Shaddād b. Ḥakīm al-Balakhī (cf. Ma'rifat, 164.) etc.

While some of them have been described as nuskha kabīra<sup>1</sup>, i.e. large collection, the others are mentioned either without any qualifying clause or with adjectives like mawḍū'a<sup>2</sup> (forged), sāliha<sup>3</sup> (correct) and mashhūra<sup>4</sup> (famous) etc., which provide no information with regard to their size. Thus only the approximate sizes of these nuskhas can be determined on the basis of literary activities of the traditionists concerned.

Literally speaking, the term an-nuskha means a copy, as distinguished from its counterpart al-Asl, meaning, 'original'. Technically, the terms nuskha and asl refer to the manuscripts of the student and the teacher respectively. Since this technical definition is directly related to the particular mode of ḥadīth transmission it is necessary to describe this practice briefly.

One of the ways to learn ḥadīth was the students' practice of copying out the traditions from the teacher's manuscripts prior to attending his lecture. The usual practice was that the students borrowed the manuscripts of the teacher from which they made their own copies to be used during the lecture. Thereafter, when the teacher

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- <sup>1</sup> e.g. (i) the nuskha kabīra of Samura b. Jundub (d. 59 A.H.) - (cf. Tahdh, iv, 198.; Tab, VII, i, 115.)  
(ii) the nuskha kabīra of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, transmitted from Sulaymān b. Bilāl at-Taymī (d. 172 A.H.). - (cf. Mizān, i, 287, no. 1076.)  
(iii) the nuskha kabīra of 'Alī b. Yazīd b. Abī Hilāl, transmitted from Qāsim b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ash-Shāmī (d. 112 A.H.) - (cf. Tahdh, vii, 396.)
- <sup>2</sup> e.g. (i) the nuskha mawḍū'a of Bishr b. Ḥusayn al-Iṣbahānī. (cf. Mizān, i, 316, no. 1192.) and (ii) Nuskha mawḍū'a of 'Ubayd b. al-Qāsim, transmitted from Hishām b. 'Urwa (d. 146). (cf. Tahdh, vii, 73.; Mizān, iii, 21, no. 5436)
- <sup>3</sup> e.g. the nuskha sāliha of Ibn Wahb, transmitted from Usāma b. Zayd al-Laythī (d. 153 A.H.). - (cf. Tahdh, i, 209.)
- <sup>4</sup> e.g. the nuskha mashhūra of Hammām b. Munabbih. - (cf. Tdh, i, 95.)

related those ahādīth, either orally or from his book, the students heard and at the same time checked their copies, by comparing it with the related traditions.

Sometimes, the teacher was reluctant to part with his book for long, lest it was lost. He, therefore, lent his book for copying to only a few of his trusted pupils and asked the rest of his students to make their copies from the manuscript prepared by those trusted few.

As we can very well see, in this particular system of ḥadīth learning two types of manuscripts are normally used - the original book of the teacher and the copies of the students. Technically, the former was called al-Aṣl whereas the latter was known as an-Nuskha. It is interesting to remark that although all the nuskhas were checked and corrected when the teacher read out the traditions in the class, yet in later times, the nuskhas of those students who had used the teacher's book (al-Aṣl) were considered more authoritative than that of those who had used the students' copies. To take for instance, the writings of Ibn Wahb and Ibn al-Mubārak were considered more authentic than the nuskhas of their fellow students. The reason given for their superiority was the fact that while Ibn al-Mubārak and Ibn Wahb had made their copies of Ibn Lahī'a's (d. 174 A.H.) traditions from the latter's original book (al-aṣl), the others only used the copies (nuskha).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jarḥ, II, ii, 147-148.

This distinction between the nuskha and the asl was, however, made rarely. In most cases, the word nuskha was freely used as a synonym of the term ṣaḥīfa or kitāb, meaning 'book'. As regards the synonymous usage of nuskha and ṣaḥīfa, we find that the 'ṣaḥīfa' of Hammām b. Munabbih<sup>1</sup> is also described as Hammām's 'nuskha mashhūra',<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, the collection of 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar, containing the traditions transmitted by Nāfi', the freed slave of Ibn 'Umar, has been described both as nuskha<sup>3</sup> and as ṣaḥīfa<sup>4</sup>. In the same manner, the ḥadīth collection of Ibn Wahb has been referred to in the sources both as 'ṣaḥīfa Ibn Wahb'<sup>5</sup> and 'nuskha Ibn Wahb'<sup>6</sup>. Again, in the account given regarding the loss of 'Abd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Ayyūb's books by fire, the words 'kutub' (the plural of kitāb) and 'nusakh' (the plural of nuskha) have been alternatively used to mean 'books'.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the scholars, Abān b. Taghlib al-Kūfī (d. 141 A.H.)<sup>8</sup>, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Abī Yaḥyā al-Aslamī (d. 184 A.H.)<sup>9</sup>, and others<sup>10</sup>, are described to have possessed many 'nusakh', which apparently means 'books'.

In the end, it should be pointed out that just as the ṣaḥīfa and

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, i, 316.

<sup>2</sup> Tdh, i, 95.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 321, 389.

<sup>4</sup> Mashāhīr, 190, no. 1524.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdh, i, 315.; xi, 253.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, xi, 254.

<sup>7</sup> Kifāya, 373.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, i, 93, where the scholar's date of death is erroneously given as 241 A.H. The correct date is 141 A.H. (cf. Mashāhīr, 164, no. 1297.).

<sup>9</sup> Mizān, i, 59, no. 189.

<sup>10</sup> like Khūṣayf b. 'Abd 'ar-Raḥmān al-Jazarī (d. 137 A.H.) (cf. Tahdh, iii, 144.) and Suhayl b. Abī Ṣāliḥ (d. 138 A.H.). (cf. Mizān, ii, 243-244, no. 3604), both of whom are said to have possessed nusakh.

kutub convey the sense of both large and small collections of ḥadīth, so does the term 'nuskha'.

(iii) Daftar:

Another important term used synonymously with kitāb and ṣaḥīfa is daftar, a Persian word<sup>1</sup>, arabicised to mean a register or book. Although it was first used in the sense of small note book, say an account book, yet very soon it began to be employed for large size manuscripts. At the close of the first century we find Zuhri using it in this sense when he said, "Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz commissioned us to write down the sunan, so we recorded them in books (fakatabnāhā daftaran daftaran), Whereupon this recorded material, each forming a daftar (large collection) was sent to various provinces.<sup>2</sup> The daftar referred to in the report, suggests the sense of large collection of ḥadīth. This meaning is aptly deducible in view of the fact that Zuhri's time, known as the 'age of manuscripts' had witnessed great literary activities in the traditionists' circle.

The word daftar, as one of the receptacles of ḥadīth, is sometimes associated with lūḥ (pl. alwāḥ). It appears that while the former was used to indicate a fair copy of the written collection of ḥadīth, the latter referred to the wooden tablets on which the temporary recording of ḥadīth was done. In fact the written material on alwāḥ served as rough notes from which the fair copies in the form of ṣaḥīfa or daftar were made.

<sup>1</sup> While Ṣūlī, in his Adab al-Kuttāb (ed. Bahjat al-Atharī, Cairo, 1341, p. 108) asserts that the word is derived from Arabic, Ibn Durayd is of the opinion that the word is of unknown derivation. (cf. Lexicon, I, iii, 889.)

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 76. ..

That the written material used to be transferred from the alwāḥ into daftar is indicated by a remark made by Abū 'Ubayda with regard to his dictation master (mustamlī), Kaysān. Speaking of the latter's deficiencies, he says, "Kaysān errs in ḥadīth (writing) in four ways: he retains in his mind something other than what he actually hears from the people, writes in the alwāḥ something other than what he retains, then he transfers from the alwāḥ (the rough notes) into daftar (fair copy) something other than what he has written in the alwāḥ, then he reads out from the daftar something other than what it contains."<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the above example that the term daftar referred to a manuscript intended to be kept as permanent record. That the word meant not only a small note book but a proper book-size manuscript can be seen from the following examples, chosen arbitrarily from scattered materials:-

- (i) 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Ubayd al-Kalā'ī reports that Makḥūl ash-Shāmī (d. 112/118 A.H.) once gave him a daftar containing the legal ahādīth and said, "Take this daftar (i.e. book) and narrate it on my authority."<sup>2</sup>
- (ii) 'Amir b. Sharāḥīl ash-Sha'bī (d. 110 A.H.) is credited with the statement 'the best traditionist is the daftar'<sup>3</sup> by which he means that the safest depository of ḥadīth is the book where they are preserved in black and white.
- (iii) Yaḥyā b. Zubayr relates, "I asked Hishām b. 'Urwa (d. 146 A.H.) to relate traditions transmitted by his father, whereupon he

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<sup>1</sup> Imlā', 92.

<sup>2</sup> Kifāya, 458.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, i, 22; ii, 228.; Mst, ii, 199/185.

presented to me a daftar, saying: 'In it are the traditions from my father. I have corrected it and (so) I am aware of what it contains. Take it, therefore, from me and narrate it on my authority'."<sup>1</sup>

- (iv) Ibn al-Muqaffā' 's (d. 142 A.H.) Kalīla wa Dimna has been mentioned in the sources both as daftar and as kitāb<sup>2</sup>, which shows that the former term was also used in the sense of 'book'.
- (v) Zuhri quotes an incident that once while he, along with others, was accompanying Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95 A.H.) on their way to Pilgrimage (Ḥajj), the latter said, 'You (all) look for the new moon, for my eyes are too weak (to sight the crescent)'. Thereupon, Nawfal b. Musāḥiq remarked, 'Do you know why it is so? It is due to excessive use of your eye-sight in (reading) dafātir.'<sup>3</sup>

The word dafātir used here could imply both 'official registers' and 'books in general'. Although the former is the more probable meaning in view of Ḥajjāj's preoccupation with reading the tax-registers himself<sup>4</sup> during his tenure of office under Umayyads, yet the other sense (i.e. book) would also seem plausible if we take into account his reputation as a schoolmaster<sup>5</sup>, who had literary taste and 'was accustomed to associate with poets'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 460.

<sup>2</sup> Paṭyri, i, 23, 24; citing Jāḥiẓ's Thalāth rasā'il, p. 42.; Mas'ūdī's Murūj adh-dhahab, viii, p. 291, and Fihrist, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Tacyīd, 140.

<sup>4</sup> He was so keen in inspecting these records himself that he caused to be translated into Arabic the tax - Dīwan which had hitherto been kept in Persian. (cf. Futūḥ, 298.; Wuzarā', 38.; Iqd, iv, 255.)

<sup>5</sup> EI (New), iii, 40.; Ma'ārif, 185.; Iqd, v, 298.

<sup>6</sup> EI (New), iii, 42.



(vi) A casual reference of dafātir (pl. of daftar) is found in a remark made by Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī (122-215 A.H.) regarding a scholar of his time. Commenting on this scholar's selective knowledge, Zayd says, "His ilm seems to have come from (the writings at) the backs of the dafātir (min zuhūr ad-dafātir)."<sup>1</sup>

In order to interpret the word dafātir which is significantly preceded by zuhūr (lit. backs), it is necessary to bear in mind the old custom of writing at the back of a manuscript.

Parallel to the modern practice of writing, by the publishers, of a note on the folders of a published book, there existed in early Islam a system whereby the author (not the publisher) himself wrote a few lines or couplets at the back of his book. Just as the publisher's note, nowadays, give in a concise form the theme of the book concerned, the authors themselves in early times wrote at the back of their books such phrases and couplets which gave a gist of their works.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that these passages (at the back of the books), the masterpiece compositions of the authors, were written in most beautiful language and in impressive lucid style, the purpose being that people be attracted to the book. The famous saying current in those days, "only the very best is written on the backs of books"<sup>3</sup> lends support to this inference. This being the case, some people preferred to read the passages at the backs of the book only and dispensed with the whole

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<sup>1</sup> Ta'ayīd, 141.

<sup>2</sup> Ta'ayīd, 134-135.

<sup>3</sup> Ta'ayīd, 141.

book. It is to one such person that Abū Zayd refers in the above example.

With this background in mind, we can safely interpret the word dafātir, occurring in Abū Zayd's statement above, as 'books'. This is evident from Mu'āfā's explanation of Abū Zayd's remark as well. Explaining the latter's statement, al-Mu'āfā says, "He (Abū Zayd) means to say that the backs of the books (zuhūr ad-dafātir) contain nothing but the best of it."<sup>1</sup>

(vii) The poets have also used the word daftar in the sense of book. Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Fārisī al-Faqīh, for instance, says, "Throughout my life I preferred loneliness; I do not have, therefore, any friend in the world. Instead, I made my book (daftari) my colleague and my friend."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Abū Bakr ash-Shayṭān had said, "I am contented with the books (ad-dafātir) alone; in exchange of these I demand nothing from the world and from my religion."<sup>3</sup>

It appears from the foregoing examples that the word daftar is used in the sense of proper books. But this is only one of its several usages. The term also means a small book or a monograph. Shaybānī's (d. 189 A.H.) Kitāb as-siyar al-Kabīr provides us with the best example for this meaning of the term. It is reported that this book was copied in sixty dafātir and presented to the caliph Manṣūr as one complete work.<sup>4</sup> The word dafātir in this report can well be rendered as 'monographs' and not 'books'.

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 141.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 144.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 144.

<sup>4</sup> Zunūn, ii, 1014.

When used in plural (dafātir), the term includes, like kutub, all the written record in possession of a certain traditionist, including booklets, tracts, treatises and epistles. When it is said, for instance, that many loads of dafātir of Zuhri were taken out of Walīd II's library<sup>1</sup>; it means that huge collections of Zuhri's writings including proper books, were carried. Similarly, when we read that 'Abd al-Ḥakam b. 'Amr's library contained dafātir on almost every subject<sup>2</sup>, or Mu'āwiya's library had dafātir dealing with pre-Islamic history and Poetry etc.<sup>3</sup>, we understand that the term dafātir indicates both large and small books, including of course the pamphlets etc. To quote one more example, it is mentioned that Ibn al-'Alā's (d. 154 A.H.) dafātir reached the ceiling of his room<sup>4</sup>. Here too, the term dafātir refers to the total collection of Ibn al-'Alā.

(iv) Qirtās and Tūmār:-

Basically, qirtās (papyrus) means a loose sheet, but it also signifies a roll, a scroll or even a book.<sup>5</sup> In the beginning it meant any single sheet (ṣahīfa) used for writing purposes<sup>6</sup>, but later, after

<sup>1</sup> Tab, II, ii, 136; Tdh, i, 106.

<sup>2</sup> Agh (B), iv, 52.

<sup>3</sup> Murūj, iii, 40, 41.

<sup>4</sup> Udabā', iv, 217. 'Amr b. al-'Alā' uses the word daftar in the sense of proper 'book'. Thus he is reported to have said once, "when I visit a person and find him looking into a daftar while (I see) his fellow companions empty handed (reading nothing), I decide that the former is superior to and wiser than the latter." (Ḥayawān i, 60.).

<sup>5</sup> Lexicon, I, vii, 2517-2518.

<sup>6</sup> Tawfīq Afandī, "Tārīkh al-Maṣāḥif", Al-Manār, X, ii, 129-130.

the introduction of paper<sup>1</sup>, it began to be applied to kāghaz - an Arabacised Persian word - meaning 'paper'.<sup>2</sup>

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As to the first introduction of paper into Islamic world, opinions differ. According to some, it was first used in the Umayyad period (cf. Fihrist, 32.; Masādir, 89.). Others hold that it was introduced during the Abbasid regime (cf. Fihrist, 32.; Masādir, 89.). Thus Maqrizī says that it was introduced into the public offices by Ja'far b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī in the time of Hārūn ar-Rashīd (cf. Khiṭat, i, 91.). But according to the most popular view, the paper was first introduced into the Islamic world after the conquest of Samarqand through the Chinese slaves. (cf. Encyclopaedia Britannica, (14th edition) vol. xvii, p. 229, art. 'Paper'.) It is said that subsequent to this battle (fought in 133 A.H.), the Arabs captured twenty thousand men, among whom were some Chinese slaves who knew the art of paper making. According to the report, it is from these slaves that the Arabs learnt the art. (cf. Grohmann, From the world of Arabic Papyri, Cairo, 1952, p. 51.)

It is significant to note that although the above report describes the story of 'paper-making', yet it has been taken to refer to the story of 'paper-using'. Doubtless, the Arabs did not know the art of paper making before this incident. But does it exclude the possibility of their importing, though in small quantity, some paper from China? Shaykh Ināyatullah, an Indian writer, answers this question in affirmative and makes a categorical statement regarding this imported paper. He says, "The Chinese paper was imported by the Arab traders engaged in maritime trade with the Far East" (cf. 'Inayatullah, "Bibliophilism in Mediaeval Islam", IC, 1938, p. 158.).

Since Inayatullah's statement is lacking in documentation, its genuineness remains dubious and therefore it is unacceptable. Nevertheless, the facts that the Chinese paper was being used in India and Persia and that Arabs were engaged in trade and commerce with these countries, lead us to suspect that some Chinese paper might have been imported into Arabia long before the art of paper-making was taught to Arabs by the Chinese slaves. Admitted, that it was not freely used, we can at least guess that the Arabs might have been in receipt of some Chinese paper and were using it for official purposes. May we not, therefore, 'assume' that when 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz asked Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm to economise in the consumption of qirtās (cf. Tab, V, 296), he referred to this imported paper in view of its rarity.

A supporting argument for this hypothesis is found in the Fihrist of Ibn an-Nadīm, where the author tells that he happened to see some old manuscripts in possession of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥuṣayn. Among these manuscripts, says the report, Ibn an-Nadīm found a document consisting of four sheets (awrāq, plural of warāq, meaning 'paper') in the handwriting of one Yaḥyā b. Ya'mar (d. 90 A.H.). According to Ibn an-Nadīm, these sheets were 'Chinese papers'. (cf. Fihrist, 61.). If this report is correct, we may safely infer that during Yaḥyā's (d. 90 A.H.) and 'Umar II's (d. 101 A.H.) time Chinese paper was in use in the Islamic world.

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Tawfiq Afandī, "Tārīkh al-Masāhif", al-Manār, X, ii, 129-130.

The word qirtās, in the sense of papyrus, was known to Arabs even before Islam<sup>1</sup>. The Qur'ān also uses it, both in its singular (qirtās) and in plural (qarātīs) forms.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that in the beginning, the word referred to 'loose sheets' of writing material. This meaning is clearly implied in the Qur'ānic verse which tells that the Jews had written down their scriptures on qarātīs, parts of which they showed while much thereof they concealed.<sup>3</sup> This could have been possible if the scripture was written on scattered sheets.

To take another example, it is reported that Khālīd b. al-Walīd had written down the charter of amnesty for the people of Syria on qirtās, which literally meant a loose sheet of papyrus.<sup>4</sup>

At the close of the first century A.H., 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz also seems using the word qirtās in the sense of 'loose sheet'. When Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm, the judge at Medina, wrote to the Caliph, asking for more papyri for official use, 'Umar replied in these words, "You have mentioned in your letter that all the papyri that you had have been finished, though I had supplied you with more (stock) than what I sanctioned to your predecessor. Make the point of your pen thinner and finer, give lesser space between (two) lines, and accumulate your requisitions (to be forwarded to me collectively so as to consume less papyri)."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maṣādir, 91, 92.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 6:7 (qirtās).; 6:91 (qarātīs).

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 6:91.

<sup>4</sup> Futūḥ, 128.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, V, 296. ..

It appears from this report that qirtās was used for official correspondence which was obviously done on loose sheets.

These sheets, known as qarātīs, were also employed to write down the tradition. To take for example, it is said of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ that once he took out qarātīs containing the Prophet's traditions and related therefrom the ahādīth regarding the conquest of Constantinople.<sup>1</sup>

It looks that in the beginning, only one side of the qirtās was used. The companion Shamḡhūn is said to be the first to write on both sides of the papyrus, who was also the first to have pressed and sewed them together.<sup>2</sup> In the second century, Ibn Jurayj (d. 150 A.H.) is reported to have brought three papyrus sheets (thalāth qirtās) to Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.). These sheets contained traditions, written on both sides (fīhi ahādīth zahran wa baṭnan)<sup>3</sup>.

The word qirtās in the above cases clearly refers to loose sheets of writing material. But we also find few references of this term where it appears to mean a book, though a small one. Thus in the saying "bi's al-mustawdi' 'l-'ilm al-qarātīs (books are bad depositories of knowledge)"<sup>4</sup>, the word 'qarātīs' seems to have been used in the general sense of 'books' and not scattered loose papyri. Similarly,

<sup>1</sup> Musnad (Sh), x; 172, no. 6645, citing Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, Futuh Misr, Leiden, 1910, pp. 256-257.

<sup>2</sup> Isāba, ii, 156, no. 3921. The first to write on both sides of the parchment (adīm) was 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who used to write the Prophet's dictation on this writing material. (cf. Fāsil, 76 a.)

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 457.

<sup>4</sup> Tagyīd, 58.; Bayān, i, 69.; Fāsil, 37b.



Bakr coll the reports that Abū Bakr collected the Qur'ān in the qarātīs<sup>1</sup> also suggests that the word indicated a 'collection of papyri' and not merely loose sheets. Again, it is said of Abū Shayba that he wrote down the ahādīth from the collection of Ḥakam, who had preserved the traditions in the qarātīs in black and white<sup>2</sup>. Here, too, the term qarātīs appears to mean a 'booklet' and not just 'loose papyri'.

'Qirtās' was also used in early times in the general sense of document, especially a state document. Thus we find a reference of bayt al-qarātīs (house of documents) as early as 35 A.H. It is reported that on the day when the caliph 'Uthmān was besieged in his house, the wife of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, who during the fight, was struck by a sword and fell, was saved by Fāṭima bint Sharīk b. Samḥā' who brought him to a house containing the qarātīs.<sup>3</sup>

Another reference to the bayt al-qarātīs is found in the event of 68 A.H., when al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik found refuge in one such 'house of documents' after he had been wounded in a fray.<sup>4</sup>

The word qarātīs used in the above examples can be easily rendered as 'rolls of papyrus'.

Bravmann calls these bayt al-qarātīs as 'a kind of archive intended for the storage of documents'.<sup>5</sup> The existence of such 'house of

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<sup>1</sup> Masāhif, 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Origin of writing...", JASB, XXV, 1856, p. 323.

<sup>3</sup> Early Islam, 313, citing Ashrāf, i, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Early Islam, 313.; Annales, ii, 790.

<sup>5</sup> Early Islam, 313.



documents' in 'Uthmān's time and thereafter makes him believe that such an institution must have existed during the rule of 'Uthmān's predecessors.<sup>1</sup> Although we find no reference to such defined institution as 'state archive' in pre-'Uthmānic period, yet it can be said that the practice of preserving important documents goes back to the time of the Prophet. It is quite well known that the document boycotting the Prophet and his family had been safely preserved by the Quraysh in the sanctuary of Ka'ba.<sup>2</sup> It was this very building on the doors of which were hanged the best odes of pre-Islamic poets.<sup>3</sup>

That the practice of preserving important documents for future reference existed in the Prophet's time is evident from the following report as well.

It is reported on the authority of 'Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr that 'Ātika bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's aunt, saw a frightening dream in which a rider was announcing the coming of an awful disaster on Meccans within three days' time.<sup>4</sup> She told this dream to her brother, al-'Abbās, through whom it was known to other Meccans until it reached the ears of Abū Jahl. When Abū Jahl heard this story he approached al-'Abbās and said, "O Banū 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, since when you have got a prophetess among you?" Then, after exchange of few dialogues between al-'Abbās and Abū Jahl, the latter warned the former that if after the lapse of three days nothing happens and thus

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<sup>1</sup> Early Islam, 313.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, i, 139-140.; Annales, i, 1189.; Sīra, 230.

<sup>3</sup> Seven poems, (Intr.), p. xi.

<sup>4</sup> This predicted the arrival of Ḍamḍam b. 'Amr al-Ghifārī in Mecca who had informed its inhabitants of the Muslims' preparation for the expedition of Badr.

'Ātika's dream does not come true, they (i.e. the Quraysh) shall write down about them (i.e. the family of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib) a document stating therein that they are the greatest liars of the people of the house (i.e. Ka'ba) among the Arabs, (naktub 'alaykum kitāban annakum akdhab ahl bayt fī 'l-'Arab).<sup>1</sup>

It appears from the threatening words of Abū Jahl that had the document in question been written down<sup>2</sup>, it would have been preserved as a record. Consequently, it looks that the practice of preserving important written records for future reference owes its origin to the time of the Prophet and, further, that the institution of 'state archive' of 'Uthmān's time was perhaps a continuation of this earlier practice.

The term 'qirtās' sometimes alternates with the word tūmar, meaning literally, a roll of papyrus. It is thus synonymous with the qirtās. Parallel to the story in which 'Umar II advises 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm to economise in the use of qarātīs, we find a report where 'Amr b. Maymūn discusses the same problem with the caliph. In this report the term tūmar has been used to convey the idea of qarātīs, which shows that both the words were used synonymously. 'Amr relates that when he drew the caliph's attention to the fact/<sup>that</sup> it was due to use of the Jalīl script - a scribal practice in which the letters are elongated - in official correspondence that a large quantity of papyrus (at-tawāmīr) from public treasury is consumed, the caliph wrote to his officials in various provinces of his empire 'not to

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<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 429.; Ṭab, viii, 30.

<sup>2</sup> Obviously it was not written as 'Ātika's dream came true in the form of Battle of Badr. (cf. Sīra, 428.)

write on tūmār in the jalīl script (biqalam jalīl) and not to lengthen the letters'.<sup>1</sup>

Another reference to tūmār is found in the biographical note of Shamghūn al-Azdī, the companion. It is reported that he was the first to have written on both sides of the tūmār and the first to have pressed and sewed them together.<sup>2</sup> Evidently, the word tūmār in the report has been used in the sense of qirtās, meaning 'loose sheet of papyrus'.

But the word tūmār, like qirtās, was not restricted to mean a 'loose sheet'. It was also used to denote a roll of a few sheets as can be seen in the following example.

It is reported that Zuhri handed over to one of his pupils a collection of his ahādīth contained in a tūmār, saying "these are my ahādīth; relate them on my authority."<sup>3</sup> Apparently, it was a 'book' which contained traditions reported on Zuhri's authority.

(v) Juz', Ajzā':-

Another confusing term for the receptacle of ahādīth is juz', (plural, Ajzā'). Literally, it means a part, portion or division of a thing, but used in context of manuscripts, it is applied to a volume of a book.<sup>4</sup> Technically, ajzā' are such collections of ahādīth

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, V, 295-296.

<sup>2</sup> Isāba, ii, 156, no. 3921.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 458.; Tārikh al-Islām, v, 149.; "Von Kremer's edition...", JASB, 1856, p. 211.

<sup>4</sup> Lexicon, I, ii, 418.

as have been narrated on the authority of one single individual.<sup>1</sup>

According to another definition, juz' is the collection of aḥādīth which deal with one particular subject matter, say for example, intention, vision of God etc.<sup>2</sup>

In ḥadīth literature the word has been used both in its literal and technical sense. As for the former, Bukhārī provides us with a report where Ibn 'Abbās uses it in the sense of section or portion. Explaining the Qur'ānic verse dealing with the treatment of the Scripture by the Jews<sup>3</sup>, Ibn 'Abbās is reported to have said that the verse means as follows: "The people of the Book have divided it (their scripture) into sections and portions (jazza'ūhu ajzā'an), in some of which they have faith, in others they disbelieve."<sup>4</sup>

The Prophet had also used the word juz' in its literal sense of part or section when he said, "I recited a juz' of the Qur'ān."<sup>5</sup> On another occasion when the Prophet was approached by a man to receive alms, the former remarked, "Verily, God Almighty was not contented with the (arbitrary) decision of the Prophet or any other person (for that matter) with regard to the ṣadaqāt (alms). He, therefore, divided (its recipients) into eight categories (fa jazza'ahā thamāniyat ajzā'). If you belong to any of these categories, I shall give you your share."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Technical terms, i, 186.

<sup>2</sup> Ujāla, 22. An example of this type of collection is the 'Qiyām al-Layl' of Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 15:91.

<sup>4</sup> SB, iii, 52 (Manāqib al-Anṣār), 269 (Tafsīr al-Qur'ān).

<sup>5</sup> SAD, ii, 75 (Shahr Ramaḍān), ḥadīth no. 1392.

<sup>6</sup> SAD, ii, 158, (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1630.

It is clear that the word juz' in the above instances has been used in its literal sense viz a part, portion or category. The word in this sense was employed by scholars as well who called various sections and volumes of their books as juz' and ajzā'. Although the exact size of these ajzā' were not normally specified, yet a closer study of its usage gave some indication of its volume.

It appears that juz' referred to a section of a book consisting of ten sheets or twenty pages, though at times it was applied to some larger collections as well. The specimen example of this usage of the term is Wāqidī's Kitāb al-Maghāzī. This manuscript, consisting of 196 leaves, has been divided into various fasciculi each comprising ten leaves<sup>1</sup>, known as al-juz'<sup>2</sup>. This gives us some idea of the size of a juz'.<sup>3</sup>

But we also find references where the word refers to a complete work of a certain traditionist. Thus the original manuscript of Daraquṭnī's 'Ilal al-ḥadīth, for instance, was known as ajzā'.<sup>4</sup>

In certain cases, the term referred to a collection of ḥadīth without specifying the size of the juz'. To take an example, Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 257 A.H.) handed over a juz' to Abū Ishāq, saying, 'This juz''

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<sup>1</sup> Magh (Preface), .5.

<sup>2</sup> Magh (Preface), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Muir gives the size of a juz' as forty pages. cf. Historical Sources, 115, n.

<sup>4</sup> Kifāya, 453.

copied by my nephew, contains the traditions related by me'.<sup>1</sup> The word juz' in this report refers to a collection of ḥadīth which could be large or small. It would not be wrong, therefore, to call it a book and not only a fascicule of ten leaves.

To cite another example, it is reported that some people brought a juz' to Yaḥyā b. Ḥassān and said that it contained the traditions narrated by Ibn Abī Lahī'a. On perusal, Yaḥyā discovered that not a single ḥadīth thereof was of Ibn Abī Lahī'a's transmission.<sup>2</sup> The word juz' in this report can also be rendered as 'book', without precluding the possibility of its interpretation as a fascicule.

In many instances, the meaning of the term remains quite obscure and it is very difficult to determine the size of a juz'. Most probably the term in general, indicated 'note books' of the size of twenty pages, as was the case with Wāqidī's Maghāzī. This meaning is more probable in cases where traditions of the same traditionist are reported to have been collected in several ajzā'. This suggests that there existed a practice of recording traditions in standard size note books. Had it not been the case, the traditionists would not have collected the traditions of their teachers in separate ajzā'. There seems no other reason, save this practice, why the traditions of the same teacher were not collected in one volume especially when the leaves, as a rule, were unsewed and kept loose.

We cite below two examples where pupils are reported to have collected their teachers' transmissions in two separate note books

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<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 453.

<sup>2</sup> Kifāya, 238.

(juz'ayn).

(i) It is reported on the authority of 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal that 'Abbās al-Madīnī presented to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal two volumes (juz'ayn) containing the latter's ahādīth with a view to obtain permission (ijāza) to transmit them on his authority. Ibn Ḥanbal looked into those two volumes and allowed 'Abbās to transmit from them.<sup>1</sup>

(ii) The same 'Abd Allāh reports that 'Abd ar-Raḥmān aṭ-Ṭabīb brought two volumes (juz'ayn) to his father and asked the latter to go through them and give him permission to transmit the ahādīth contained in it on his authority. Ibn Ḥanbal took those two books (al-kitābayn), compared them with his own copy, made some corrections, and permitted 'Abd ar-Raḥmān to transmit the ahādīth on his authority.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from 'volume' or 'note book', the term juz' also sometimes indicated a single loose sheet of writing material, say paper. This is evident from a report found in Dhahabī's Tadhkirat al-Huffāz. Describing the famous works of Ibn Faṭīs (d. 402 A.H.), Dhahabī says, "He wrote Kitāb Asbāb an-nuzūl in 100 juz', Kitāb Fadā'il as-sahāba in 100 juz', Kitāb ma'rifat at-tābi'īn in 150 juz', an-Nāsikh wa'l-mansūkh in 30 juz' and Kitāb al-Ukhūwwa in 40 juz'.<sup>3</sup>

If we take the word juz' in the above report in the sense of a section, it would mean that the first two and the third books were divided into 100 and 150 parts respectively, which is very unlikely. By using the term in the sense of fascicule of 20 pages, we would

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<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 465.

<sup>2</sup> Kifāya, 468.

<sup>3</sup> Tdh, iii, 248.



bring the total number of pages of the first two books to 2000 (20 x 100) and of the third one to 3000 (20 x 150). This, too is unthinkable. The most probable meaning of the term juzu' occurring in this report is, therefore, 'single sheet'.

This meaning is clearer in other examples where the sizes of the hadīth collections of Muḥammad b. Naṣr (d. 294 A.H.) and Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Māsirjisi (d. 365 A.H.) have been respectively described as 2000<sup>1</sup> and 3000<sup>2</sup> juz'. Apparently, these figures indicate neither so many 'sections' nor so many 'fasciculi' which after multiplying by 20 (for each fascicule consists at least of twenty pages) gives unimaginable number of pages - 40,000 and 60,000 respectively. It appears, therefore, that the word juz' in these reports refers to 'loose sheets' and nothing else.

That the word indicated 'loose sheets' of paper is apparent in the following report as well: Ḥamza al-Kattānī is reported to have said, "I possess 200 juz' (containing the traditions narrated) by Ibn Jawṣā'; I wish fair copies of them were made (laytahā kānat bayādan)."<sup>3</sup> It is very clear from this report that juz' were nothing but loose sheets of paper on which Ḥamza had made his rough drafts. As these were the first drafts, he wished them to be copied fairly. In another report it is said that Sufyān ath-Thawrī tore to pieces one thousand juz' and scattered them in the air.<sup>4</sup> The word juz' in this report too suggests 'single sheet' of writing material.

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<sup>1</sup> Tdh, ii, 203.

<sup>2</sup> Tdh, iii, 156-157.

<sup>3</sup> Tdh, iii, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Udabā', v, 389.

Thus we see that the word juz' not only indicated a section of a book, a note book, or a book proper, but it sometimes referred to a 'single sheet' as well.

(vi) Kurrāsa:-

Similar to the term juz' is kurrāsa, which not only refers to a small note-book but is also applied to a book proper. Literally, it denotes a collection of a few loose sheets. It is derived, perhaps, from the verbal form takarrasa, meaning, 'he collected together firewood'.<sup>1</sup>

We find frequent reference of this term in connection with the recording of the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth. To take an example, disapproving the writing down of ḥadīth, Ibrāhīm an-Nakha'ī (d. 96 A.H.) is reported to have said that he disliked that aḥādīth be recorded in karārīs (innahū kariha an tuktab al-aḥādīth fī 'l-karārīs).<sup>2</sup> Similar opinion was expressed by Mujāhid (d. 102 A.H.) who is said to have disliked the writing of 'ilm (i.e. ḥadīth) in karārīs.<sup>3</sup> Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim (d. 105 A.H.), too, had disapproved the recording of ḥadīth in karārīs and had said, "Do not collect the ḥadīth in karārīs like the Qur'ān (lā tattakhidhū lī 'l-ḥadīth karārīs kakarārīs al-maṣāḥif)."<sup>4</sup>

Although the sources do not specify the exact size of the kurrāsa (note-book), it seems that the term referred to a booklet containing a number of loose sheets. Sprenger specified the number as ten leaves.

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<sup>1</sup> Lexicon, I, vii, 2606.

<sup>2</sup> Tac'yīd, 48.

<sup>3</sup> SD, i, 121.

<sup>4</sup> Tac'yīd, 19, 47.

Commenting on Ḍaḥḥāk's statement<sup>1</sup>, mentioned above, he says that 'the word employed for books in this ḥadyth is kurrās, which means a fasciculous of ten leaves or twenty pages'.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, he does not point to the source on the basis of which he drew this conclusion. He could not have possibly taken this word in its literal sense which denotes a quire of paper generally consisting of five sheets, forming ten leaves of a book.<sup>3</sup> It is also unlikely that he would have taken the word in paper making term of kurrāsa, which means 'one twentieth of a ream of 480 or 500 sheets',<sup>4</sup> i.e. a note book of 24 or 25 pages. Most probably, he considered kurrāsa as synonymn of juz' which, as we have seen, means, inter alia, a book of ten leaves or twenty pages.

As a matter of fact, the exact size of kurrāsa and also that of its sister terms like ṣaḥīfa, juz' and even kitāb are nowhere specified in early Islamic literature. It is, nevertheless, clear that these terms were used both in the sense of a booklet and a book. We have already seen the different connotations of the words kitāb, ṣaḥīfa and juz'. It remains to be seen whether kurrāsa too was employed to connote both senses. The following few examples will show that it did convey both meanings:

(i) In the report dealing with 'Alqama b. Qays' (d. 62 A.H.) practice of collating the Qur'ān copies of his friends with that of his own codex, it is mentioned that he used to return the corrected scripts piecemeal. The terms used for these scripts have been described as warāqa and kurrāsā which seem to mean a 'loose sheet' and a 'note book'

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<sup>1</sup> He wrongly calls this statement a 'ḥadīth'.

<sup>2</sup> "Origin of writing...", JASB, XXV, 1856. p. 309.

<sup>3</sup> Lexicon, I, vii, 2606.

<sup>4</sup> Papyri, ii, 60, n. 248.

respectively. The report says, "No sooner did 'Alqama finish (comparing) with his Muṣḥaf than he returned to his friends one kurrāsa, two kurrāsa, one waraqa and two waraqa (as the case may be)."<sup>1</sup>

The word kurrāsa in the above report does not seem to mean a book purporting to mean the Qur'ān. It rather suggests the 'quires' used for the copies of the Qur'ān.

It seems that in the earlier statement of Ḍaḥḥāk also where karāris occurs with al-masāḥif, the term referred to the 'quires' which were used to record the text of the Qur'ān.

(ii) Ibn Jurayj (d. 150 A.H.) is reported to have brought a kurrāsa to Abān b. 'Ayyāsh (d. 138 A.H.) asking the latter's permission to narrate the traditions contained in it on his authority.<sup>2</sup>

The term kurrāsa used here seems to mean a large volume which contained Abān's aḥādīth. It can, therefore be translated as a 'book'.

(iii) It is reported that Ghālib b. 'Ubayd Allāh used to dictate aḥādīth to his students from a kurrāsa. Khalīfa b. Mūsā, one of his pupils, makes a casual reference to this collection of ḥadīth. He says that once while his teacher was away, he stealthily looked into his kurrāsa and discovered, to his astonishment, that the teacher was dictating the aḥādīth of Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh (d. 138 A.H.) while using Makhūl's name.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Masāḥif, 169.

<sup>2</sup> Kifāya, 459.

<sup>3</sup> SM, i, 9.

The word kurrāsa in this report can be interpreted both as a 'book' proper and a 'note-book' of only a few pages.

From the foregoing examples, it appears that the term kurrāsa meant both a 'note-book' and a 'book'. As to the exact size of this type of manuscript we find no reference. Most probably, they were, as a rule, booklets containing 200 to 500 traditions<sup>1</sup>, but at times referred to larger collections as well. Among the latter category may be mentioned the kurrāsa of Bahz, containing the ahādīth transmitted by 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far (d. 178 A.H.).<sup>2</sup>

(vii) Other terms for the receptacles of ḥadīth:-

In addition to the terms discussed above, the words such as risāla, lūh, majalla, sikāk, raqq and ruq'a etc. also denoted the receptacles in which the traditions were preserved in black and white. Thus in addition to the famous risāla of Shāfi'ī, we are told of the risāla of Samura b. Jundub which contained much 'ilm (tradition),<sup>3</sup> and the risāla of Zayd b. Thābit, containing the ahādīth regarding the farā'id (Inheritance).<sup>4</sup>

That Zuhri used to record the traditions on alwāh (plural of lūh) is quite well known.<sup>5</sup> Long before Zuhri, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās used to record traditions on this writing material.<sup>6</sup> Following him, his pupil

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, v, 174, 176.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, iv, 236.; Mst, ii, 10/23.

<sup>4</sup> Sunan (B), vi, 248.

<sup>5</sup> Tdh, i, 103.

<sup>6</sup> Tagyid, 91, 92, 109.

Mujāhid wrote down the tafsīr in Alwāh.<sup>1</sup> Again, it is reported that Ahmad b. Hanbal used to carry the alwāh to write down the traditions.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the ḥadīth collection of Anas b. Mālik was known as majāll (the plural of majalla)<sup>3</sup> and Ṣikāk (the plural of Ṣakk).<sup>4</sup>

So far as the 'raqq' is concerned, it is reported that the book of Muḥammad b. Sīrīn, which reached his brother Yaḥyā b. Sīrīn, was written on raqq'atīq (old parchment).<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Mālik b. Anas is reported to have written down the aḥādīth transmitted by Zuhri in a volume described as raqqasfar (yellow book).<sup>6</sup>

As regards the ruq'a, it is reported that 'Uthmān b. Ṣāliḥ had collected the aḥādīth transmitted by Mālik in this receptacle and had presented it to the latter for collation.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā adh-Dhuhlī<sup>8</sup> and 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Mahdī<sup>9</sup> had collected the traditions in ar-Ruq'a.

Although the sources do not indicate the sizes of receptacles, we can determine their varying sizes in the light of the literary activities of their authors or their compilers. So far as the English renderings

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<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr, i, 90.

<sup>2</sup> Dimashq, i, 46.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 95.

<sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 96.

<sup>5</sup> Imlā', 173.

<sup>6</sup> Kifāya, 494.

<sup>7</sup> Kifāya, 468.

<sup>8</sup> Kifāya, 468-469.

<sup>9</sup> Kifāya, 344.

of these terms are concerned, the terms ṣaḥīfa, kitāb, nuskha, majalla, sikāk and risāla may be translated as 'book' unless the context suggests any other meaning. As regards the terms kurrāsa and juz', they can be safely rendered as tracts or booklets; and the words raqq, ruq'a and tūmār indicate 'the memorandum notes'.

## 2. Actual Records:-

Having dealt with the various receptacles of ḥadīth, we now turn to the early ḥadīth records of individual scholars. By 'early records' I mean the written materials of ḥadīth from the Prophet's time till the time of Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.). The reason for arbitrarily confining my studies to the first century and a quarter of the second, is the fact that whereas the records of the scholars of the post-Zuhri period are quite known, the literary activities of earlier scholars, which provided source material for future collections, have not received fair attention, rather ignored. No doubt, the first century scholars are recognised as authorities on the subject, ~~but~~ their contribution as the recorders and collectors of ḥadīth has not been acknowledged. This is partly due to the indifference of the muḥaddithūn themselves, who, while discussing the narrations of these scholars, did not emphasise, though occasionally mentioned, this aspect of their literary career.

In fact, the later scholars were primarily concerned with the content 'ḥadīth' as such. They were basically interested in the substance (the ḥadīth) rather than the form in which it was preserved (memory or writing). It is true that the question of writing and memory was much discussed in earlier times, as it is also a fact that writing was, for sometimes, disapproved by a few scholars, yet it



should be remembered that it was a temporary phase which resulted in the ultimate victory of writing. It should also be recalled that even at the time when writing was disapproved, the scholars used to write secretly, at least for their personal use. Thus it is wrong to suppose that the recording of ḥadīth commenced when the prejudice against writing had gone. In fact, the writing of ḥadīth had started right from the beginning. One of the main reasons which led to the emergence of the theory of late recording of ḥadīth was not bringing to light the literary activities of the scholars of the first century. By overlooking this aspect, the whole picture of the development of ḥadīth writing remained incomplete. This clearly explains why a probe into this early period is necessary.

We know fairly well that from Zuhri's time onwards systematic collection of ḥadīth began to appear. These, in fact, were made on the basis of the then existing written manuscripts. The main task of Zuhri and his successors was not so much to discover and collect as to arrange and classify the available traditional material. During the whole second century, as is known fairly well, the muṣannafāt and Jawāmi' (the ḥadīth books arranged according to subject matter) were compiled, and by the middle of the third century the classical works including the six canonical works (as-siḥāḥ as-sitta) appeared and some recognised.

Thus we see that the compilations of post-Zuhri period are fairly known and generally accepted. It is only the written records of the first century till the age of Zuhri that are in obscurity. It would perhaps be rewarding, therefore, if we could point, through a probe into rich store of source material, to the ḥadīth collections made during this period.

In this connection, it is important to note that ḥadīth, as it appears from the contents of classical ḥadīth collections, deals with all social, legal, religious and administrative matters, and is not restricted to rituals (ibādāt) alone. Thus, while dealing with the records of this early period, we shall take into account not only the legal aḥādīth but all ritual, juridical and historical traditions that have found place in the collections of ḥadīth. In other words, any report concerning the Prophet's actions, speech or behaviour, shall form the subject matter of this chapter, provided of course it was written down in black and white.

Incidentally, it should be pointed out that the early written records were first kept preserved either in individual scholar's private manuscripts or in his hearts or in both. Then it was transmitted, again either orally or through writing or sometimes by both means, to next generation of scholars, who, in their turn, preserved the material in their own writings and in their memories. This process of transmission, both oral and written, continued from one generation to another till in the third century after hijra it found permanent fixity in classical ḥadīth collections. Thus, despite the fact that almost all original manuscripts of the early period have been lost, their contents are safely preserved in the existing ḥadīth books.

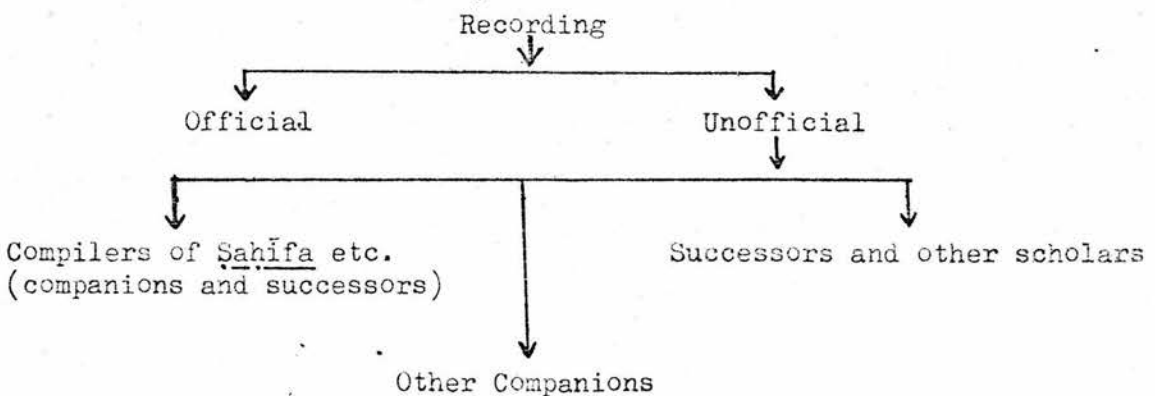
The above premise is not without foundation. With a view to fill the gap (created by the advocates of the theory of ~~the~~ late recording of ḥadīth) of about a century, from the Prophet's till Zuhri's time, we discuss below the written records of the scholars of each generation, beginning with the time of the Prophet himself.

A cursory glance at the following pages will show that the traditions, in one form or the other, were recorded in black and white right from the time of the Prophet. This being the starting point, the practice continued even after his death - during the whole of the first century and thereafter. The sources given ample reference to the writings of the scholars right from the Prophet's time till the time of Zuhri, after which books began to appear in large quantities. The writing of ḥadīth reached its climax in the third century after hijra, when the classical texts were compiled.

Confining our studies to the period of one and a quarter century of Islamic era, we shall discuss the written records of this period according to the following classification:

- (i) Official recording during the Prophet's time.
- (ii) Unofficial recording during the Prophet's time and thereafter,  
subdivided into:
  - (a) Recording by the compilers of ṣaḥīfa, nuskha, majalla, and risāla etc., from amongst the companions and the successors.
  - (b) Recording by other companions.
  - (c) Recording by the successors and other scholars.

The above classification can be shown through the following diagram:



(i) Official recording during the Prophet's time:-

In addition to the recording of the Qur'ān, for which special arrangement was made, a score of other material was written down on Prophet's initiative. This written material covering varied subjects like politics, religion, law, commerce and revenue etc. may be divided under the following headings:

(a) Legal and financial matters.

(b) Political and administrative matters, which may be subdivided under:

- i) Treaties, pacts and agreements.
- ii) Charters, amnesties and grants of land (iqtā').
- iii) Instruction to civil servants.
- iv) Letters to tribes and tribal chiefs.
- v) Letters to the rulers of the neighbouring countries.
- vi) Census.
- vii) War records.
- viii) List of emissaries.

(c) Commercial and other transactions.

(d) Sermons and stray ahādīth.

We discuss each of them separately.

(a) Legal and financial matters:-

(i) Kitāb as-sadaqa: The Prophet during the last years of his life is reported to have dictated a kitāb, called as-sadaqa, which contained rates of zakāt in respect of animals.<sup>1</sup> According to reports, this booklet was prepared to be sent to his provincial governors so that they could levy taxes on flocks and herds according to the provisions

<sup>1</sup> SAD, ii, 129-130 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1567.; Jāmi', x, 134-135n.; SD (Med.), i, 321.; Amwāl, 363, 366; Sunan Darq., ii, 117. (Zakāt).; SIM, i, 553 (Zakāt).

contained therein. But before the copies of this kitāb could be despatched to these governors, the Prophet passed away<sup>1</sup>. This booklet, after his death, was found in the sheath of his sword.<sup>2</sup> The succeeding caliph Abū Bakr is said to have acted according to its dictates. After his death it came in possession of his successor, 'Umar<sup>3</sup>, and then, after 'Umar's assassination, the kitāb was found attached to his sword (maqrūna bisayfihi).<sup>4</sup>

It seems that the above kitāb on ṣadaqa, compiled at the end of the Prophet's life, contained revised rules of zakāt, for reference to such taxes are found much earlier. The examples below will show that such rules were sent to different tribes from time to time in the form of letters.

(ii) Rules of zakāt and other legal matters in the form of letters:

(i) It is well known that when 'Amr b. Hazm (d. 51 A.H.) was sent to Yemen as governor, the Prophet gave him a kitāb (written instruction) regarding zakāt and other legal matters (as-ṣadaqāt wa'd-diyāt wa'l farā'id wa 's-sunan).<sup>5</sup>

The kitāb is said to have survived in the family of 'Amr b. Hazm till the time of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, who is reported to have obtained

<sup>1</sup> SAD, ii, 131 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1568.; SD (Med.), i, 321.

<sup>2</sup> SAD, ii, 131 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1568.; SD (Med.), i, 321.; Kharāj, 76.; Musnad, vi; 290, 291, 298.

<sup>3</sup> SAD, ii, 131 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1568.; SD (Med.), i, 321.

<sup>4</sup> SD (Med.), i, 321.

<sup>5</sup> Sīra, 961.; Bayān, i, 71.; Tacwīd, 72.; Ikhtilāf, 17-18.; Bagh, viii, 228.; Annales, i, 1727-1729.; Intā', i, 501, 502.; Wathā'iq, no. 105. Jamharat, i, 62-65.; Subh, x, 9.; Amwāl, 358-362.; SN, viii, 56-61. (Qasāma); Kharāj, 42.

a copy of it during his caliphate.<sup>1</sup> The copy from the original document is said to have been made by Muḥammad b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān<sup>2</sup>. Referring to this document Zuhri says that the Prophet's letter, written on a leather parchment, was brought to me by Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm.<sup>3</sup> He further adds that he had read that document.<sup>4</sup>

(ii) Another document, containing the rules of zakāt on animals and other legal matters, was the Prophet's letter (kitāb) to Shuraḥbīl<sup>5</sup> b. 'Abd Kulāl, Ḥārith b. 'Abd Kulāl, Nu'aym b. 'Abd Kulāl, and an-Nu'mān, the chieftain of Dhī Ru'ayn, Hamdān and Mu'āfir.<sup>6</sup>

(iii) 'Alā' b. al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 14 A.H.) during his governorship of Baḥrayn was given written rules regarding the taxes on camels, cows, goats and sheep, fruit crops and hoardings<sup>7</sup>. He is reported to have collected the revenues according to rules provided in this document.<sup>8</sup>

(iv) The peace treaty concluded between the Prophet and 'Amr b. Ma'bad, Banū 'l-Ḥuraqa and Banū 'l-Jurmuz of the Juhayna tribe, also contained the rate of zakāt in respect of fruit crops.<sup>9</sup>

(v) Another document containing the rules of zakāt was the kitāb given by the Prophet to 'Uyayna b. Ḥaṣīn and Aqrā' b. Ḥābis when they called on the Prophet. 'Uyayna is reported to have kept this document in his turban and said, "I am carrying to my people a kitāb, the contents

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<sup>1</sup> Amwāl, 358-359.

<sup>2</sup> Amwāl, 359.

<sup>3</sup> SN, viii, 59 (Qasāma).

<sup>4</sup> SN, viii, 59 (Qasāma).

<sup>5</sup> Variant 'Shurayḥ' (cf. Amwāl, 13, 21.) and 'Sharḥ' (cf. Futūḥ, 82.).

<sup>6</sup> Amwāl, 13, 21, 27.; Tab, I, ii, 19, 20, 32, 84.; V, 386-387.; Sīra, 955, 957.; Annales, i, 1718-1720.; SN, viii, 58 (Qasāma); SD (Med.), i, 320, 322, 323.; Futūḥ, 82.; Wathā'iq, no. 109.; Nihāya, xviii, 118.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 76.; Jamharat, i, 43.; Wathā'iq no. 59 (a).

<sup>8</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Tab, I, ii, 24-25.; Wathā'iq no. 152

of which I do not know. It is like sahifa given to Mutalammis (Kasahifat Mutalammis).<sup>1</sup> Hearing this, the Prophet is reported to have explained its contents to 'Uyayna.

The document was written down by Mu'āwiya.<sup>1</sup>

(vi) Another important letter, called as-sahifa, of this nature was despatched to the tribe of Banū Aslam and other muslims residing at Sayf and Sahl. In this letter, the Prophet had specified the rules regarding the taxes on animals (mawāshī). It was written by Thābit b. Qays b. Shammās and witnessed by Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāh and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.<sup>2</sup>

(vii) 'Abd Allāh b. 'Ukaym al-Juhani is reported to have possessed the Prophet's letter containing the laws regarding dead animals.<sup>3</sup>

(viii) The Prophet is said to have sent to the tribe of Ḍaḥḥāk b. Sufyān al-Kilābī a written ruling with regard to a legal issue of inheritance. It dealt with the widow's entitlement to inherit from the blood money of her deceased husband. In Ḍaḥḥāk's words, "the Prophet had sent this law in writing to my tribe."<sup>4</sup>

(ix) Mention can also be made of the document in possession of Muṭarrāf b. Kāhin al-Bāhili, who had called on the Prophet after the conquest of Mecca. It is reported that on going back to his tribe, the Prophet gave him a charter of security along with a note containing the laws of zakāt on animals.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SAD, ii, 157 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1629.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, ii, 82.; Wathā'iq no. 168.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad, iv, 310-311.; Wathā'iq no. 156.; Musnad (Ṭ), no. 1293.; Jāmi', vii, 234-236 (Libās); SAD, iv, 94-95, ḥadīth nos. 4127-4128 (Libās).

<sup>4</sup> Risāla, 113-114; SIM, ii, 142 (Diyāt).; Umm, vi, 77 (Mirath ad-diya).; Muwatta', iv, 194-195 (Uqūl).; Jāmi', vi, 185-186 (Diyāt).; SAD, iii, 178 (Farā'id), ḥadīth no. 2927.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 33.; Wathā'iq, no. 188.; Nihāya, xviii, 50.



(x) 'Alī possessed a ṣahīfa from the Prophet which contained, among other things, the rules regarding blood money, the taxes on animals and other legal provisions.<sup>1</sup> He used to keep it in the scabbard of his sword.<sup>2</sup>

Referring to this document (kitāb) 'Alī's son, Muḥammad b. Ḥanafīyya, says, "My father asked me to carry this kitāb to 'Uthmān, for it contained the Prophet's instructions regarding the ṣadaqa (arsalanī abī, khudh hādha 'l-kitāb fa 'dhab bihī ilā 'Uthman fa inna fīhi amr an-nabī fī's-ṣadaqa").<sup>3</sup>

It is significant to note here that keeping of important documents along with the sword was, and still is, a common practice in Arabia. "To this very day", says Prof. Serjeant, "in Southern Arabia tribesmen carry documents in a little leather pocket behind one scabbard of their daggers along with a small knife and other instruments."<sup>4</sup>

(xi) Another document containing the laws of ṣadaqāt was possessed by Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān al-Azdī (d. 36 A.H.), who used to collect the taxes from the people of Dabā' (a place between 'Ammān and Baḥrayn) according to the zakāt schedule provided in this booklet (kitāb).<sup>5</sup> It is reported that he collected the revenue throughout during the Prophet's lifetime. After his death, when people refused payment he apprised Abū Bakr, the ruling caliph, of this state of affairs. The Caliph, thereupon, sent 'Ikrima b. Abī Jahl to deal with this matter.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tab, vi, 116, 156; Musnad (Shaf.), 104; Taqyīd, 88-89.; Bayān, i, 71; Umm, vii, 292.; SB, ii, 296, 298 (Jizya).

<sup>2</sup> SM, iii, 266 (Adāhī).

<sup>3</sup> SB, ii, 277 (Fard al-khums).

<sup>4</sup> Serjeant, "The Constitution of Medina", IQ, VIII, nos. 1 & 2, p.5.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VII, i, 72.; Wathā'iq, no. 78(a).

<sup>6</sup> Tab, VII, i, 72.; Wathā'iq, no. 78(a); Ma'ārif, 137.

(xii) A letter containing the laws of sadaga and khums was despatched by the Prophet to the tribes of Judhām and Sa'd Hudhaym. It was addressed to both tribes jointly. According to the instructions contained therein, they were required to pay the revenues to the Prophet's two agents, namely Ubayy and 'Anbasa or their representatives.<sup>1</sup>

(xiii) In a letter addressed to Wā'il b. Ḥujr and other chieftains of Ḥaḍramawt, the Prophet laid down rules regarding the zakāt on animals and treasure.<sup>2</sup> It also contained punishment of fornication and drinking.<sup>3</sup>

(b) Political and administrative matters:-

The documents of this nature were mainly written and handed over to people in the post-migration period. They can be divided into the following main categories:-

i) Treaties, pacts and agreements:

(i) Pact with Damra tribe: A non-aggression pact - to use modern terminology - was concluded between the Prophet and Banū Ḍamra at the time of Ghazwat al-Abwā' in 1/2 A.H. It promised full security to the person and property of the tribe of Banū Ḍamra. In return, the Prophet was to receive assistance against acts of aggression.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps, it was the first treaty between the Muslims and the tribes of Medina.<sup>5</sup>

(ii) Treaty with the tribe of Ghatafān: A draft treaty was concluded between the Muslims and the tribe of Ghatafān during the battle of Khandaq in 5 A.H. On not being ratified, it was scratched out.

<sup>1</sup> Ṭab, I, ii, 23, 24.; Wathā'iq, no. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, I, ii, 35, 79.; Tabyīn, ii, 27.; Iqd, i, 112.; Jamharat, i, 58-60.; Wathā'iq, no. 133.; Nihāya, xviii, 113.; Ṣubḥ, ii, 246.; vi, 371-374.

<sup>3</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 133.; Ṣubḥ, vi, 371-374.

<sup>4</sup> Ṭab, I, ii, 27.; II, i, 3.; Jamharat, i, 70.; Wathā'iq, nos. 159, 160.; Imtā', i, 53.; Siyāsī Zindigī, 247.

<sup>5</sup> Siyāsī Zindigī, 247.

The treaty has been described in the sources as al-kitāb and as-sahīfa.<sup>1</sup>

(iii) Treaty of Hdaybiya: This treaty concluded between the Muslims and the Meccans in 6 A.H. is very well known. Its text has been preserved in almost all early works.<sup>2</sup>

(iv) Pact with Ukaydir and the people of Dumat al-Jandal:

A peace treaty was concluded between the Prophet and Ukaydir, the ruler of Dumat al-Jandal, in 9 A.H.<sup>3</sup> Following the ancient custom of the people of Hira, who used to take impression on documents - baked bricks in general - not of thumb but of finger nail<sup>4</sup>, the Prophet also sealed this document with his finger-nail (bizufrihi).<sup>5</sup> The Prophet did so to satisfy Ukaydir, the ruler of Dumat al-Jandal, who was originally from Hira, the place where such custom prevailed.

This document, written on a white parchment (qadīm-ṣahīfa bayḍā'), was preserved at least until the time of Abū 'Ubayd (d. 224 A.H.) who is reported to have not only read it but also copied it. He says, "As regards this kitāb, I have actually read its contents and have copied it letter by letter (ammā hādha 'l-kitāb fa anā qara'tu nuskhatahū... fanasakhtuhū harfan biharfin)".<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 676.; Tab, II, i, 52, 53.; Annales, i, 1474.; Imtā', i, 235.; Wathā'iq, no. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Amwāl, 157-160.; Sīra, 747-748.; Magh, 388.; Tab, II, i, 70, 71.; Kharāj, 129. Annales, 1546-1547.; Imtā', i, 297-298.; Imtā', 12.; Iqd, 20.; Jamharat, i, 30-32.; Subh, iv, 14.; Wathā'iq, no. 11.; SB, ii, 167-168 (Sulh), 172 (Shurūṭ).; iii, 116, 117, 143 (Maghāzī).

<sup>3</sup> Amwāl, 194-195.; Tab, I, ii, 36.; Futūh, 72-73.; Subh, vi, 370.; Wathā'iq, no. 190.

<sup>4</sup> In the archaeological excavations, pre-Christian documents of contracts have been discovered, carved on burnt bricks, bearing not only a crescent (produced by the impression of finger nail) but also the clarification 'the finger nail has been fixed by way of confirmation' (cf. Hamīdullah, Sahīfa, 18, referring Oluf Krücyman, Neubabylonische Recht-und verwaltungstexte (Text 37, Tafel 38); Ch. Edwards, The Hammurabi Code, p. 11, Meissner, Babylonien Und Assyrien, I, 178.)

<sup>5</sup> Tab, II, i, 120.; Subh, ii, 246.; Jamharat, i, 49, 50.; Tarātīb, i, 179.; Wathā'iq, no. 190.

<sup>6</sup> Amwāl, 194, 195.

(v) Peace treaty with the inhabitants of Ayla: Another peace-treaty was concluded between the Prophet and the people of Ayla when Yuḥanna b. Ru'ba, the leader of the tribe, called on the Prophet at the time of the battle of Tabūk.<sup>1</sup>

Although Prof. Serjeant suspects the authenticity of the famous letters of the Prophet sent to rulers of the neighbouring countries, he considers this document, along with other less well-known letters to Arab chiefs, as authentic.<sup>2</sup>

(vi) The treaty with the Bāriq tribe: Another treaty was concluded with the people of Bāriq when they called on the Prophet. The treaty was signed by Ubayy b. Ka'b and witnessed by Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ and Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān.<sup>3</sup>

(vii) Treaty with the tribe of Aslam: A peace treaty was concluded between the Prophet and the Aslam tribe. It stipulated mutual help and defence against foreign attacks on either parties. It began with the words, "This is a writing (kitāb) from Muḥammad, the apostle of Allāh, to Aslam...."<sup>4</sup>

(viii) Pact with the tribe of Juhayna: Another treaty of alliance was concluded between the Prophet and the Juhayna tribe, stipulating terms of peace.<sup>5</sup>

This treaty contained, inter alia, the law about the tithe of the fruit crops.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Amwāl, 200.; Sīra, 902.; Tab, I, ii, 28, 29, 37.; Wathā'iq, no. 31, 31(a), 32.; Jamharat, i, 48.; SB, ii, 293 (Jizya).; Musnad, v, 425.; SM, iv, 56-57 (Faḍā'il).

<sup>2</sup> Serjeant, "The constitution of Medina", IQ, VIII, nos. 1 & 2, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 35, 81.; Nihāya, xviii, 116.; Wathā'iq, no. 124.

<sup>4</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 166.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 24, 25.; Wathā'iq, no. 152.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, I, ii, 24, 25.; Wathā'iq, no. 152.

That such a treaty was concluded between the parties is evidenced by a report found in Ibn Hishām's Sīra. In the account of the expedition led by Ḥamza, sent towards 'Is (a place near the seaport of Yanbū'), it is mentioned that Majdīy b. 'Amr al-Juhanī interposed between the muslims and the Quraysh in his capacity as 'a sworn ally of both the parties (muwādi'an li'l-fariqayn)'.<sup>1</sup>

(ix) Peace treaty with the inhabitants of Maqna and Banū Janba:

The Prophet is reported to have entered into a peace agreement with the people of Maqna in 9 A.H. The text of the document covered a space of a few sheets. It began with the words: 'This is a kitāb from Muḥammad, the apostle of Allāh, for Ḥunayna, for the people of khaybar and Maqna and for their descendants (lidharārīhim)'.<sup>2</sup> Another version read as '(From Muḥammad) to Banī Janba and to the people of Maqna'.<sup>3</sup> Balādhurī renders 'Banī Janba' as 'Banī Ḥabība'.<sup>4</sup> This, perhaps, is due to wrongly placing the diacritical points.

The different versions of the text suggest that they were copied from an original manuscript and not simply heard verbally.

(x) Treaty with Thaḳīf: A treaty was concluded between the Prophet and the Thaḳīf during last years of the former's life. It was relatively a lengthy document containing, inter alia, clauses which guaranteed the autonomy of Thaḳīf, their rights and privileges and the Prophet's promise to support them against all oppressors. On account of Thaḳīf's strong position, the terms of the treaty were mostly in their

<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 419.

<sup>2</sup> Udabā', i, 247-248.; Wathā'iq, no. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 28.; Futūḥ, 71, 72.; Wathā'iq, no. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Futūḥ, 71; Futūḥ (Georje), 60.

favour.<sup>1</sup>

The full text of the treaty has been preserved by Abū 'Ubayd in his kitāb al-Amwāl<sup>2</sup>, while fragments of it recur in other works.<sup>3</sup>

(xi) Treaty with Banū Ghifār: The Prophet concluded a peace treaty with them in 2 A.H. Through this treaty, Banū Ghifār were promised safety of their person and property. In return they were to assist the Prophet against acts of aggression. The treaty is referred to as 'al-kitāb'.<sup>4</sup>

(xii) Pact with the people of Jarbā' and Adhruḥ: In 9 A.H. when the deputation of these tribes called on the Prophet, he gave them a rescript promising them thereby security of life and property. In return it binded them with kind and upright behaviour towards muslims and obliged them to afford refuge and give assistance when muslims sought such refuge or assistance.<sup>5</sup>

Muir considers this and many other documents as genuine.<sup>6</sup>

(xiii) Treaty with the people of Najrān: In addition to the letter addressed to the muslims of Najrān despatched with 'Amr b. Ḥazm<sup>7</sup>, the Prophet had also dictated a document concerning the Christians of Najrān<sup>8</sup>. This document, among other things, promised full protection to their person and property and gave them complete freedom to practise their religion. The document also gave them their autonomy. At the same time it asked them to pay a tax, the amount of which was prescribed

<sup>1</sup> Tab, I, ii, 33.; Iqd, i, 110.; Jamharat, i, 52-53.; Wathā'iq, no. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Amwāl, 190-196.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 33.; SAD, iii, 222-223, (al-kharāj....), ḥadīth nos. 3025-3026.; Wathā'iq, no. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 26, 27.; Wathā'iq, no. 161.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 37.; Imtā', i, 468-469.; Wathā'iq, no. 32, 32 (a).

<sup>6</sup> Mahomet, iv, 190, n.

<sup>7</sup> Sīra, 961-962.; Umm, vi, 103.; Amwāl, 358-362.; Muwatta', iv, 175-176 (Uoūl)

<sup>8</sup> Kharāj, 41.; Tab, I, ii, 35, 36, 85.; Amwāl, 188-189; Futūḥ, 76, 77.; Wathā'iq, no. 94.



as 2000 hullas (Yemenite garments) or the equivalent. It also forbade them to practise usury.

The authenticity of this treaty was confirmed by Abū Bakr, who, after the Prophet's death, wrote another document acknowledging the one written by the Prophet.<sup>1</sup> It was later ratified by 'Umar<sup>2</sup> and 'Alī<sup>3</sup> as well.

(xiv) Treaty with Banū Zur'a and Banū 'r-Rab'a: Another treaty guaranteeing security of person and property was concluded between the Prophet and Banū Zur'a and Banū 'r-Rab'a of Juhayna tribe. Through this treaty, they were given a pledge of assistance against an aggression provided they remained faithful to their obligation and abstained from acts of treachery.<sup>4</sup>

(xv) Treaty with Banū 'l-Ashja': A group of a hundred people from Ashja' came to the Prophet in the year of the Ditch (Khandaq) under the leadership of Mas'ūd b. Rukhayla. They alighted at Shi'b Sal' and offered peace proposal to the Prophet. The latter agreed to it and dictated a peace treaty which promised mutual assistance and faithfulness in dealing with each other.<sup>5</sup>

(xvi) Constitution of Medina: The most important political document of this period is the 'Constitution of Medina', which was drafted after the emergence of a muslim state in Medina. Although the term 'Constitution', taken in its strict modern sense, cannot aptly be applied to this document, yet it has to be admitted that it possessed the characteristics of a constitution to meet the requirements of that

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<sup>1</sup> Kharāj, 41.; Annales, i, 1987-1988.; Amwāl, 189.

<sup>2</sup> Kharāj, 41, 42.; Tab, I, ii, 85; Wathā'iq, no. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Kharāj, 42.; Wathā'iq, no. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 24, 66.; Wathā'iq, no. 151.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 26, 48, 49.; Wathā'iq, no. 162.



period. In the words of Ḥamīdullah, "It is the first written constitution of any state in the history of the world."<sup>1</sup>

The full text of 'the constitution of Medina' is found in Ibn Hishām's Sīra and several historical and other works.<sup>2</sup> In some sources only references to and extracts from the document are found.<sup>3</sup> Many passages from this political document have been preserved by compilers of ḥadīth works like Ibn Ḥanbal<sup>4</sup>, Bukhārī<sup>5</sup>, Muslim<sup>6</sup>, Abū Dā'ūd<sup>7</sup>, Tirmidhī<sup>8</sup>, Nasa'ī<sup>9</sup> and Ibn Māja.<sup>10</sup>

A copy of this document, kept in the scabbard of the Prophet's sword, was discovered after his death.<sup>11</sup>

ii) Charter, amnesties and grants of land:

These documents were written and handed over to various individuals and tribes during the post-migration period. Notables among them are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Ṣaḥīfa, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 341-344.; Amwāl, 202-207.; Wathā'iq, no. 1.; Social Structure, 273-275.; War and Peace, 84-87.; Jamharat, i, 25-30.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 172.; II, i, 19, 23.; Annales, i, 1359, 1367.; Taqyīd, 72.; Imtā', i, 49, 104, 107. Serjeant, "The Constitution of Medina", IQ, Viii, nos 1 & 2, pp. 3-16.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad, i, 79, 119, 122, 271.; ii, 178, 180, 194, 204, 211, 215.; iii, 221, 242, 249, 321, 342, iv, 141.

<sup>5</sup> SB, ii, 274, 396 (Jizya); iv, 428 (I'tisām bi'l-kitāb wa's-sunna).

<sup>6</sup> SM, ii, 702 ('Itq).

<sup>7</sup> SAD, iv, 252 (Diyāt), ḥadīth nos. 4530-4531.

<sup>8</sup> Jāmi', vi, 180-182 (Diyāt).

<sup>9</sup> SN, viii, 23-24 (Qasāma).

<sup>10</sup> SIM, ii, 145 (Diyāt).

<sup>11</sup> Imtā', i, 107.; Ṣaḥīfa, 30, 31.; Wathā'iq, no. 1.

(i) Amnesty to Surāqa b. Mālik:- At the time of the Prophet's migration to Medina, a letter of amnesty was given to Surāqa b. Mālik. It was dictated by the Prophet and written by Abū Bakr<sup>1</sup> (or, according to some reports, by 'Amir b. Fuhayra).<sup>2</sup> This letter proved as a saviour for his life at the time of the conquest of Mecca.<sup>3</sup>

(ii) Charter to Nimr b. Tawlab al-'Uklī:- About the year 7 A.H. when Nimr embraced Islam, the Prophet gave him a charter in writing. It was written on a leather parchment (qit'at adīm) and was addressed to Banū Zuhayr b. Uqaysh of the tribe of 'Uklī. The document promised protection and safety on conditions that the tribesmen believed in the unity of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad, dissociated themselves from the polytheists, offered prayers, paid zakāt and gave fifth (khums) and Prophet's share from the booty (maghānim).<sup>4</sup>

(iii) Charter to Azraq b. 'Amr:- Azraq came from Syria and told the Prophet that he had no relation in Mecca but he wanted to settle down there. The Prophet thereupon gave him a charter in writing, saying that Azraq and his descendants were permitted to stay in Mecca and were allowed to marry in any of the tribes of the Quraysh they wished.<sup>5</sup> The document was preserved in his family till 80 A.H. when it was lost in a flood, which had devastated his house and swept away all his households.<sup>6</sup>

(iv) Charter to Zayd al-Khayr:- Zayd was the leader of a fifteen men delegation of the tribe of Tayy which had called on the Prophet. He was at that time known as Zayd al-Khayl. The Prophet changed the word Khayl (lit. horse) to Khayr (virtue). In this meeting, the Prophet granted him, through a charter, Fayd and other lands. But Zayd died on his way home and his wife, afflicted with grief, burnt the document.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 332.; Imtā', i, 42, 421.; <sup>2</sup> Musnad, iv, 176.

<sup>3</sup> Sīra, 332.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 30.; Musnad, v, 77, 78.; Anwāl, 11, 12.; Subh, xiii, 329, 330.; SAD, iii, 210 (Kharāj...).

<sup>5</sup> Akhbār, ii, 200.

<sup>6</sup> Akhbār, ii, 200.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, I, ii, 160.; Sīra, 947.; Annales, 1747-1748.

(v) Charter to 'Akk Dhū Khaywān: 'Akk called on the Prophet and informed him of his own as well as his tribesmen's conversion to Islam. Then he requested the Prophet to write for him a confirmatory title deed for the lands already in his possession. The Prophet complied with his request and granted him a charter which not only confirmed his right of ownership to his lands but promised complete safety and protection of his life and property. The document was written by Khālīd b. Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ.<sup>1</sup>

(vi) Grant to Tamīm ad-Dārī: The inhabitants of Dār, known as ad-Dārīyyūn, called on the Prophet twice - once during the pre-migration period and secondly after the migration. During their first visit they requested the Prophet to grant them some peices of land. Complying with their request, the Prophet gave them Ḥabrūn, Martūm, Bayt 'Aynūn, and Bayt Ibrāhīm, and what they contain, through a charter drafted on a piece of leather (qit'at jild min adam)<sup>2</sup>.

After the Prophet's migration to Medina, the document was brought to him for renewal. It is reported that the Prophet accepted their demand and wrote for them a new charter. It began as follows: 'In the name of Allāh, the Beneficient, the Merciful. This is a writing (kitāb) from Muḥammad, the messenger of Allāh, to Tamīm b. Aws ad-Dārī. It entitles him (Tamīm) of the villages of Ḥabrūn and Bayt 'Aynūn, the entire two villages with their plains and hills, their watering places and cultivations....!<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 18.; SAD, iii, 223 (Kharāj...), ḥadīth no. 3027.; Wathā'iq no. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Subḥ, xiii, 119.; Nihāya, xviii, 105-107.; Jamharat, i, 70-71.; Wathā'iq, nos. 43, 44.; Tab, I, ii, 21, 22, 75.; Amwāl, 274-275.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 21, 22.; Kharāj, 132.; Subḥ, xiii, 121, 122.; Jamharat, i, 72-73.; Wathā'iq, no. 44.

It is reported that this document existed in Tamīm's family for a long time. After the Prophet's death, it was ratified and renewed by Abū Bakr, the succeeding caliph.<sup>1</sup> In his letters to his army commander (amīr al-askar) in Syria, Abū Bakr referred to the lands granted to ad-Dāriyyūn.<sup>2</sup> 'Umar, during his reign, also acknowledged the rights of Dāriyyūn over their lands but gave them only one third of it and left the two thirds for the use of wayfarers and for the welfare of the community.<sup>3</sup>

The existence of this document has been proved till the time of Qalqashandī (d. 821 A.H.), who says that the leather on which the charter was written was seen by some of his contemporaries in the hands of some Tamīmīyyīn.<sup>4</sup>

The authenticity of the document has, however, been doubted by Krenkow, who suspects it on the ground that the names of the witnesses (the four guided caliphs) were given in accordance with their succession.<sup>5</sup>

To suspect the genuineness of the document on this basis does not seem to be well warranted, for it could only be accidental. Furthermore the occurrence of the title 'Atīq for Abū Bakr's name<sup>6</sup> gives a probable clue to the authenticity of the document. 'Atīq is an abbreviated form

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<sup>1</sup> Kharāj, 132.; Ṣubḥ, xiii, 121.; Wathā'iq, no. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Ṣubḥ, xiii, 120-121.; Wathā'iq, no. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Ṣubḥ, xiii, 104.

<sup>4</sup> Ṣubḥ, xiii, 122.

<sup>5</sup> Krenkow, "Grant of Land by Muhammad to Tamīm ad-Dāri", Islamica, 1924, I, 529-532.

<sup>6</sup> The text reads, "Atīq b. Abū Quhāfa." - Ṣubḥ, xiii, 120.

of ʿAtīq an-nār (the one freed from Fire, i.e. Hell), which was a title given to Abū Bakr by Muḥammad on one occasion.<sup>1</sup> To write ʿAtīq for Abū Bakr does not seem to be the work of a later forger.

Moreover, the document having the names of these witnesses in order of their succession to caliphate, is not without any precedent and hence not unique and liable to be suspected. A similar instance is found in the case of the treaty of Ḥudaybiya - a document considered to be fully authentic. The witnesses in this treaty have been mentioned as follows: Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, ʿAbd Allāh b. Suhayl b. ʿAmr, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Maḥmūd b. Maslama, Mikraz b. Ḥafṣ and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.<sup>2</sup> Disregarding other witnesses, we find that the three future caliphs have been mentioned in order. The omission of ʿUthmān's name is due to his absence from the scene.

A similar coincidence of names of the caliphs in order, is found in the document by which the Prophet had manumitted his slave Abū Rāfiʿ Aslam. Here we find the names of the three 'would be caliphs' (Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿAlī) in order of succession.<sup>3</sup>

In the light of the above observations, we can say that the document given to Tamīm cannot be declared unauthentic on the ground that the names of witnesses are mentioned in the order of their succession to the caliphate. Furthermore, the fact that granting of land through charter (iqṭāʿ) was not uncommon, makes it highly probable that such a document was handed over to the tribe of Tamīm as well. Moreover, the

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<sup>1</sup> Tab., III, i, 120.; Tdh., i, 3, n.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 748-749.

<sup>3</sup> Wathāʾiq, no. 222.; Tarātib, i, 274.

reports about its renewal by the Prophet in his post-migration period and by Abū Bakr during his own reign, and its acknowledgement by 'Umar, cannot be dismissed easily. On the contrary, they all go to prove that such a document was given by the Prophet to Tamīm. As regards its survival, we have Qalqashandī's testimony to its existence during his own lifetime i.e. till 9th century A.H.

(vii) Grant of land to 'Abbās as-Sulamī: When 'Abbās as-Sulamī called on the Prophet and requested for a grant of land, the latter gave him, through a charter, Rakīya (a tract of land) situated at Dathnīya.<sup>1</sup>

The document existed in the family of 'Abbās at least for three generations, for his grandson Nā'il is reported to have shown it to Abū 'l-Azhar, who tells us that it was written on a red leather parchment (adam aḥmar).<sup>2</sup>

(viii) Charter to 'Uqayl b. Ka'b: When the delegation of the tribe of 'Uqayl called on the Prophet, the latter granted them by a charter, al-'Aqīq - a land containing water springs ('uyūn) and palm trees (nakhl). The document was written on a red leather (adīm aḥmar). It was addressed to Rabī', Muṭarraḥ and Anas.<sup>3</sup>

Later, the charter was in the possession of Muṭarraḥ.<sup>4</sup>

(ix) Grant to 'Addā' b. Khālīd: The Prophet granted al-'Addā' b. Khālīd and those of the tribe of 'Āmir b. 'Ikrima the land situated between 'Miṣbā'a' and 'az-Zuhḥ' and gave a charter to this effect. It was written by Khālīd b. Sa'īd.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, VII, i, 54.; Wathā'iq, no. 210(a).

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VII, i, 54.; Wathā'iq, no. 210 (a).

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 45.; Wathā'iq, no. 216.

<sup>4</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 216.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 25.; Wathā'iq, no. 223.



(x) Charter to Raqqād b. Rabi'a: The Prophet granted him a farm at 'Falj' - a town in al-Yamāma - and wrote, to this effect, a document which was preserved in his family.<sup>1</sup>

(xi) Grant to Thawr b. 'Urwa al-Qushayri: A delegation of the tribe of Banī Qushayr called on the Prophet and accepted Islam. In return, the Prophet gave them a tract of land - Jamām and Sadd - and wrote a document to this effect.<sup>2</sup>

(xii) Charter to 'Abd al-Qays: A charter was given by the Prophet to the tribe of 'Abd al-Qays. It gave them promise of security and laid down certain rights and duties. It began as follows: "From Muḥammad, the messenger of Allāh, to al-Akbar b. 'Abd al-Qays<sup>3</sup>. They shall be secure in the safety and protection of Allāh and the Prophet against what they had done by way of initiating blood feuds in pre-Islamic days...."<sup>4</sup>

(xiii) Charter to Qayla and her tribe: A document written on a piece of red leather (qit'at min adīm aḥmar) was handed over by the Prophet to Qayla bint Makhrama at-Tamīmīyya. It promised her and her tribe a safeguard against their rights and privileges.<sup>5</sup>

(xiv) Charter to Mālik b. Aḥmar al-Judhāmī: Hearing the news of the Prophet's arrival at Tabūk, Mālik is reported to have come and embraced Islam. Then, on his request, the Prophet dictated on a piece of parchment (qit'at min adam) a document which promised security to him and those of the muslims who followed him. They were promised this

<sup>1</sup> Tab, I, ii, 46.; Wathā'iq, no. 226.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, ii, 46-47.; Wathā'iq, no. 227.

<sup>3</sup> This name is unknown to biographers. Perhaps, the document was addressed to Lukayz b. 'Abd al-Qays, which by copyist's mistake became Akbar. This indirectly suggests that the later documents were copied from written texts.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 32, 33, 54.; Wathā'iq, no. 72.; Amwāl, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 58.; Wathā'iq, no. 142.; Iqd, i, 137-138.; SAD, iii, 239 (Kharaj...)



security on conditions that they would perform prayers, pay zakāt, follow the muslims, dissociate themselves from the polytheists and give out of the booty, the fifth (al-khums), the share of those in debt and the share of other persons.<sup>1</sup>

The document has been described in the sources as of four fingers in width and a span (shibr) in length.<sup>2</sup>

(xv) Charter to Banū'l-Bakkā': In 9 A.H. a three men delegation from the tribe of Banū'l-Bakkā' called on the Prophet and accepted Islam. The Prophet showed them great hospitality and treated them honourably. On their return, he gave them a charter providing security to their tribe. The document read as follows: "From Muḥammad, the Prophet, to Fujay' (one of the three delegates called on the Prophet) and those who followed him and those who embraced Islam. Whosoever offered prayers, gave zakāt, obeyed Allāh and His Prophet, gave out of the booty the fifth (as share) of Allāh, helped the Prophet and his companions, confessed the faith of Islam and dissociated himself from the polytheists, he will be safe in the safety of Allāh and Muḥammad."<sup>3</sup>

(xvi) Grant to 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Aṣamm: 'Abd ar-Raḥman belonged to the tribe of Banū'l-Bakkā'. He had called on the Prophet along with other members of the delegation. At that time he was known as 'Abd 'Amr al-Aṣamm. The Prophet did not like this name and changed it to 'Abd ar-Raḥmān. Then he gave him a document confirming the right of ownership to a watering place, named Dhī'l-Qaṣṣa, already in his possession.<sup>4</sup>

(xvii) Grant of land to Muḥjā'a b. Murāra: The Prophet granted

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<sup>1</sup> Jarḥ, IV, i, 203.; Wathā'iq, no. 174.

<sup>2</sup> Jarḥ, IV, i, 203.; Wathā'iq, no. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 47.; Wathā'iq, no. 217.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 47.; Wathā'iq, no. 217(a).

'al-Shawra', 'Ghurāba' and 'Hubal' to Muḥammad and wrote for him a document to this effect. The Prophet through this rescript made him the sole owner of the properties and added a clause saying, "Should anyone contend with you (come) to me (i.e. to the Prophet)."<sup>1</sup>

(xviii) Charter to Bilāl b. al-Hārith al-Muzanī: Bilāl was given the mines of al-Qabaliyya - situated near Fur' - and other cultivable lands through a charter issued in his favour by the Prophet. The lands granted to him included the cultivable parts of Qadas, an-Naḥl, Jazza'a, Maḍḍa, al-Jaz', Ghayla and the whole of al-ʿAqīq.<sup>2</sup>

Bilāl remained the owner of these lands till the time of ʿUmar, who, after coming to power said to Bilāl, "You cannot utilise all this (property)." Thereafter he asked him to distribute it, with the exception of mines.<sup>3</sup>

The document issued in favour of Bilāl seems to have existed in his family for about a century for it is reported that it was brought to ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 101 A.H.), who received it with great veneration.<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to note that an American Company had recently succeeded in finding gold after excavating an old mine in a village called 'Qabīl' - a name similar to 'Qabaliyya'. The mine yielded gold for two years. Also found near this mine was an inscription regarding the Prophet's charter to Bilāl b. al-Hārith.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Amwāl, 280-281.; Futūḥ, 102-103.; Wathā'iq, nos. 69, 70.; Jamharat, i, 66, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Amwāl, 338-339.; Kharāj, 35.; Muwatta', ii, 100 (zakāt).; Wathā'iq, nos. 163-165.; Tab, I, ii, 25.; SAD, iii, 235-236 (kharāj) ḥadīth nos. 3061-3063.

<sup>3</sup> Kharāj, 61, 62.

<sup>4</sup> Amwāl, 339.

<sup>5</sup> Siyāsī Zindigī, 253.

(xix) Charter to Mālik b. an-Namat: When in 9 A.H., a delegation from Hamadān called on the Prophet, he wrote and handed over to its leader, Mālik b. Namat, a charter guaranteeing them peace and security. The document also granted some lands and other privileges to Mālik and those members of his tribe who embraced Islam.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding survival of this document Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 206 A.H.) says, "It is still (till his time i.e. 206 A.H.) preserved in their family (huwa ilā' l-ān fī aydihim)."<sup>2</sup>

(xx) Grant of land to Khālīd b. Dimād al-Azdī: The Prophet, through a charter, granted Dimād<sup>3</sup> the lands which the latter possessed at the time of his conversion to Islam. The document also promised security to the person and property of his family provided they followed the tenets of Islam.<sup>4</sup>

(xxi) Other charters: In addition to the individuals and tribes mentioned above, many others were granted amān rescripts and Iotā' (grant of land) documents. Among these recipients may be mentioned Banī 'l-Jurmuz,<sup>5</sup> Awsaja b. Ḥarmala al-Juhānī<sup>6</sup>, Ḥuṣayn b. Aws al-Aslamī<sup>7</sup>, Judhām<sup>8</sup>, Asqa' b. Shurayḥ b. Hurayyim<sup>9</sup>, Yazīd b. at-Tufayl<sup>10</sup>, 'Abd Yaghūth b. Wa'la<sup>11</sup>, Yazīd b. al-Muḥajjal<sup>12</sup>, 'Asim b. al-Ḥārith<sup>13</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 963-964.; Tab, I, ii, 73-74.; Subḥ, vi, 374.; Annales, i, 1732.; Wathā'iq, no. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Usd, IV, i, 294-295.

<sup>3</sup> The name of this person is not mentioned in the biography collections.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 21.; Wathā'iq, no. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 24.; Wathā'iq, no. 153.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, I, ii, 24.; Wathā'iq, no. 154.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, I, ii, 22.; Wathā'iq, no. 167.

<sup>8</sup> Tab, I, ii, 23.; Subḥ, vi, 368.; Wathā'iq, no. 177.; Jamharat, i, 60-61.

<sup>9</sup> Tab, I, ii, 69-71.; Nihāva, xviii, 95. Wathā'iq, no. 180.

<sup>10</sup> Tab, I, ii, 22.; Wathā'iq, no. 82.

<sup>11</sup> Tab, I, ii, 22.; Wathā'iq, no. 84.

<sup>12</sup> Tab, I, ii, 22.; Wathā'iq, no. 86.

<sup>13</sup> Tab, I, ii, 23.; Wathā'iq, no. 88.

Harām b. 'Awf<sup>1</sup>, Junāda al-Azdī<sup>2</sup>, Abū Zubyān<sup>3</sup>, Thumāla wa 'l-Huddān<sup>4</sup>,  
 Usaybukht b. 'Abd Allāh<sup>5</sup>, Banū Tha'labā b. 'Amir<sup>6</sup>, Hadas of Lakhm<sup>7</sup>,  
 Ruhāwīyūn<sup>8</sup>, Jufayna<sup>9</sup>, and Jābir b. Zālim at-Tā'i<sup>10</sup> etc.

### iii) Instructions to civil servants:-

Among the written records of earlier times were the instructions sent by the Prophet to his provincial officials like the qādīs, the tax collectors, the governors and the inspectors of schools.

It is significant to note that in the Prophet's time, the 'executive' and 'judiciary' was normally amalgamated. Thus we see that Mu'adh b. Jabal, who received the Prophet's written instructions, was not only a tax collector and inspector of schools but also a judge. Similarly, 'Amr b. Hazm was sent to yemen with the instructions regarding sadaqāt, farā'id, sunan and diyāt.<sup>11</sup> This shows that he was appointed there not only to collect taxes, to give religious education and to act as governor but also to act as a judge.

As the officials in those days were assigned multifarious duties,

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, I, ii, 26.; Wathā'iq, no. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, ii, 23.; Wathā'iq, no. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 40.; Wathā'iq, no. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 82.; Nihāya, xviii, 116.; Wathā'iq, no. 78.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 27.; Wathā'iq, no. 65.

<sup>6</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 41.; Tab, I, ii, 21.

<sup>8</sup> Tab, I, ii, 76.; Wathā'iq, no. 117.; Imtā', i, 507.; Nihāya, xviii, 107

<sup>9</sup> Usd, i, 291.; Wathā'iq, no. 92.

<sup>10</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 198.

<sup>11</sup> Amwāl, 358-361, 387.

the Prophet used to send them comprehensive instructions regarding varied topics. Thus we see him sending instructions regarding prayer, pilgrimage, booty, charity and zakāt in one single letter.<sup>1</sup> Another document sent to one of his officials dealt with zakāt, booty, major sins, hajj, divorce, prayer and blood money.<sup>2</sup>

Among the instructions sent in writing by the Prophet to his officials may be mentioned the letter addressed to 'Alā' b. al-Ḥaḍramī, which contained the rules regarding the zakāt on camels, cows, sheep, fruit crops and property. The letter asked 'Alā', the governor of Bahrayn, to receive these taxes from the rich and distribute it among the poor.<sup>3</sup> According to other reports, the Ḥaḍramīs, in this letter, were directed to observe prayer and pay zakāt - the two basic tenets of Islam.<sup>4</sup>

Similar written instructions were sent to Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, who was appointed as a tax collector at Azdāba, a place between 'Umān and Bahrayn.<sup>5</sup> Other written instructions were sent to 'Amir al-Juhanī<sup>6</sup> and Qabīṣa b. al-Makhāriq<sup>7</sup>, the tax collectors.

In 9 A.H., when Abū Bakr set out for the hajj pilgrimage as a leader of delegation, the Prophet sent to him a note, containing rules regarding hajj. The note was handed over to him by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sīra, 961-962.; Annales, i, 1727-1729.; Kharāj, 42.; Wathā'iq, nos. 137-141.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 955-957.; Annales, 1718-1720.; Tab, I, ii, 20, 84.; v, 386-387.; Wathā'iq, no. 145, 146, 149.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 76.; Wathā'iq, no. 59(a).

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, ii, 27.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VII, i, 72.; Wathā'iq, no. 78(a).

<sup>6</sup> Amwāl, 605.

<sup>7</sup> Amwāl, 610.

<sup>8</sup> Akhbar, i, 112.

connection can Mention in this connection can also be made of the written instructions given by the Prophet to commanders of the expeditions.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes sealed instructions were given with the order not to read them before reaching a certain destination. Thus 'Abd Allāh b. Jaḥsh was given a letter (kitāb) with the instruction not to open (and carry out its orders) until after two days' journey.<sup>2</sup> Other instructions were sent to leaders of expeditions while they were on their way. To take for instance, the Prophet wrote to Suhayl b. 'Amr, who was on his way to Mecca, "If this letter of mine reaches you during the night, do not wait for the morning; if it arrives during the day, do not wait till evening (to carry out its orders)."<sup>3</sup>

iv) Letters to the tribes and tribal chiefs:

In addition to the Prophet's letters to individuals and tribes, granting them amnesties and lands, there were others, addressed to tribal chiefs. In these letters he had either invited them to the faith of Islam or outlined its basic tenets for the new converts. This was done either on his own initiative or on request. Ibn Sa'd has provided us with detailed information about these letters.<sup>4</sup> Abū 'Ubayd, in his kitāb al-Amwāl<sup>5</sup>, and others have also referred to these letters

<sup>1</sup> SB, i, 27 ('ilm).

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, ii, 63.; Sīra, 423-424.; Annales, i, 1273-1274.; Imtā', i, 56.; Kifāya, 447.; Akhbār, ii, 40.

<sup>3</sup> Akhbār, ii, 40.; Wathā'iq, no. 221.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 15-38, 38-85.

<sup>5</sup> Amwāl, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 37, 125, 188, 189, 190-199, 200, 201, 202, 273-275, 280-282, et passim.

here and there. The following may be cited as specimen examples:-

(i) Letter to Banū Hāritha b. 'Amr b. Qurayz:

In a letter sent by the Prophet to Banū Hāritha b. 'Amr, the former invited the latter to embrace Islam (yad'ūhum ilā 'l-Islām).<sup>1</sup>

The sources say that the recipients of the letter (as-ṣahīfa) did not accept the faith.<sup>2</sup>

(ii) Letter to the inhabitants of Damā:

The Prophet is reported to have despatched a letter to the people of Damā, one of the villages of 'Umān, inviting them to Islam. 'Umān at that time was under the suzerainty of Persia.

That the letter of the Prophet reached Damā has been attested by Abū Shaddād, one of its residents. He says, "when the letter of the Prophet, written on a piece of leather, came to us, we did not find a person who could read it. After much difficulty a boy was found who read it to us."<sup>3</sup>

(iii) Letter to Judhām and Quḍā'a:

The Prophet in his letter, addressed jointly to Sa'd Hudhaym of the tribe of Quḍā'a and to Judhām, specified the rules regarding alms, and instructed them to pay the ṣadaqa and the fifth of the booty (khums) to his two agents, Ubayy b. Ka'b and 'Anbasā or their representatives.<sup>4</sup>

(vi) Letter to Nahshal b. Mālik Wā'ilī:

When Nahshal visited the Prophet after the conquest of Mecca<sup>5</sup>, the latter wrote a document for him and those of his tribe. It

<sup>1</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 235 (a); Imtā', i, 441.

<sup>2</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 235 (a).; Imtā', i, 441.; Ma'ārif, 114.

<sup>3</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 23, 24.; Wathā'iq, no. 177.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 49.



promised security to them on condition that they accepted the faith, observed prayers, gave alms, obeyed Allāh and His Apostle, gave fifth of the booty and Prophet's share, testified to their conversion to Islam and separated themselves from the polytheists.<sup>1</sup>

(v) Letter to the brigands of Tihāma:

The Prophet wrote a letter to the miscellaneous group of brigands of the tribes of Kināna, Muzayna, Ḥakam, Qāra and the slaves who followed them. In this letter he promised them not only security and emancipation from slavery but offered many privileges on condition that they embraced Islam, offered prayers and gave zakāt.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the documents mentioned above, the Prophet had also sent letters to the tribes of Mahra<sup>3</sup>, Khath'am<sup>4</sup>, Banū Nahd<sup>5</sup>, Jaram<sup>6</sup>, to the clans of Kalb<sup>7</sup>, Banū 'l-Ḥārith<sup>8</sup>, Azd<sup>9</sup>, the people of Hajar<sup>10</sup>, and the kings of Ḥimyar<sup>11</sup> and of 'Umān<sup>12</sup> etc.

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- 1 Tab, I, ii, 33, 49.; Wathā'iq, no. 189.; Nihāya, xviii, 50.
  - 2 Tab, I, ii, 29.; Wathā'iq, no. 173.
  - 3 Tab, I, ii, 34, 83.; Wathā'iq, nos. 137, 138.; Nihāya, xviii, 117-118.
  - 4 Tab, I, ii, 34, 35, 78.; Wathā'iq, no. 186.; Nihāya, xviii, 111.
  - 5 Tab, I, ii, 22.; V, 385.; Wathā'iq, nos. 89, 90, 91.; Ṣubḥ, vi, 368-369.
  - 6 Tab, I, ii, 69, 71.; Wathā'iq, no. 180.; Nihāya, viii, 95.
  - 7 Tab, I, ii, 29, 34.; Iqd, i, 109.; Wathā'iq, no. 191, 192.; Nihāya, viii, 93.; Jamharat, i, 51-52.
  - 8 Tab, I, ii, 22.; Wathā'iq, nos. 81, 83, 85, 87.
  - 9 Tab, I, ii, 21, 22, 23, 40, 76, 77.; Wathā'iq, nos. 120, 121, 122, 123.; Nihāya, xviii, 108.
  - 10 Tab, I, ii, 27.; Amwāl, 199.; Futūḥ, 90, 91.; Wathā'iq, nos. 60, 60(a).
  - 11 Tab, I, ii, 19, 20, 32, 84.; V, 386, 387.; Sīra, 955-957.; Annales, 1718-1720.; Amwāl, 13, 21, 27.; SN, viii, 58.; Futūḥ, 82.; Nihāya, viii, 118.; Wathā'iq, no. 109.
  - 12 Amwāl, 20-21.; Wathā'iq, no. 66.; Ṣubḥ, vi, 380.

v) Letters to the rulers of neighbouring countries:-

During the period between the truce of Ḥudaybiya and his death, the Prophet despatched several letters of proselytism to the Arab and non-Arab monarchs.<sup>1</sup> The most well known among them were (i) Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor<sup>2</sup>, (ii) The Persian Chosroes<sup>3</sup>, (iii) the Egyptian Muqawqis<sup>4</sup> and (iv) the Abyssinian Negus<sup>5</sup>. The text of these letters occur in both historical and non-historical works, where their authenticity is taken for granted. Jāḥiẓ mentions these letters along with others to show the importance of writing. Taking for granted their authenticity, he remarks, "Had the Prophet wished, he would not have written letters to Chosroes, Caesar, Negus, Muqawqis, Banī 'l-Julanda, the King of 'Umān, 'Abāhila of Ḥimyar, Hawdha b. 'Alī and other great monarchs. But (since) the Prophet knew that writing was the best suited (means to propagate his religion, he adopted this method)."<sup>6</sup>

But despite frequent mention of these letters in early historical works, doubts have been cast in the West about their authenticity. Quoting Caetani's Annali, Wensinck remarks, "The letters sent to

<sup>1</sup> Amwāl, 20-24.; Annales, i, 1559-1560.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, ii, 16, 162; Muḥabbar, 75.; Ḥayawān, i, 98.; Jamharat, i, 32-35.; Annales, i, 1565.; Amwāl, 22-24.; Wathā'iq, nos. 26, 27, 28.; Musnad, i, 263.; iii, 133, 441, 442.; iv, 74, 75.; Ṣubḥ, vi, 376-377.; SB, i, 7 (Bad'al-wahy), 232-235, 243 (Jihād); iv, 417 (Akhbār al-Aḥād), 495 (Tawḥīd).

<sup>3</sup> Annales, i, 1571-1572.; Amwāl, 23.; Wathā'iq, no. 53.; Ṣubḥ, vi, 296, 377-378.; Jamharat, i, 35, 36.; Muḥabbar, 77.; Ḥayawān, i, 98.; Tab, I, ii, 16.; SB, i, 27 (Ilm), ii, 232 (Jihād), iv, 417 (Akhbār al-Aḥād); Bagh, i, 132.; Musnad, iv, 75.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 16, 17.; Futūḥ Miṣr, 46, 47.; Khiṭaṭ, i, 29.; Muḥabbar, 76.; Ḥayawān, i, 98.; Wathā'iq, nos. 49, 50.; Ṣubḥ, vi, 378.

<sup>5</sup> Annales, i, 1569.; Muḥabbar, 76.; Ḥayawān, i, 98.; Amwāl, 23-24.; Usd, i, 62.; Ṣubḥ, vi, 379, 466-467.; Wathā'iq nos. 21, 22, 23, 24.; JRAS, 1940, p. 54.; Siyāsī Zindigī, 125-131.

<sup>6</sup> Ḥayawān, i, 98.

the great powers of his time... inviting them to embrace Islam... are... of a doubtful authority, if indeed they are not wholly legendary."<sup>1</sup> He adds, "Signora Dr. Vacca is probably right in supposing that these and similar tales (the sending of letters by the Prophet to the Great Powers of his time) were invented to furnish the Prophet's exequatur for the conquerors who conducted the Muhammadan armies to the four quarters of the world."<sup>2</sup>

Among the contemporary scholars, Prof. Serjeant categorically declares the letters sent to Caesar, Chosroes and the Negus as 'not genuine'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Prof. W. Montgomery Watt declares the reports about the Prophet's summoning the rulers of the surrounding empires to Islam as 'not credible'.<sup>4</sup>

But if we bear in mind the purpose of Muhammad's mission - the propagation of Islamic faith in the world<sup>5</sup> - the reports about his embassies to various provinces and monarchs do not seem incredible. Furthermore, the 'signet ring' of the Prophet, whose existence has been proved till the time of 'Uthmān<sup>6</sup>, provides circumstantial evidence of the possibility of his despatches to the rulers of the world. It is related that when the Prophet wanted to write to the kings, he was told that the letters without official seals were not entertained by the monarchs of his time.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Creed, 7,8.

<sup>2</sup> Creed, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Serjeant, "The Constitution of Medina", IQ, VIII, nos 1&2, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> Statesman, 177, 194.

<sup>5</sup> The following verses are cited in support of the concept of the universality of Islamic faith: Qur'an, 3:96.; 6:90.; 12:104.; 21:107.; 22:25.; 25:50.; 34:28.; 36:70.; 38:87.; 67:52.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, I, ii, 165.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, I, ii, 162.

As he was genuinely interested in dispatching these letters, he had a signet ring prepared for that purpose, over which were engraved the words 'Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh.'<sup>1</sup> That such a ring was prepared has now been confirmed after discovery of two of the letters bearing this seal.<sup>2</sup>

The authenticity of few letters has recently been proved after they were discovered in their original form. To take for instance, the original letter addressed to Heraclius, remained preserved until very recently.<sup>3</sup> Margoliouth, who seems to consider this letter authentic, points to the actual year when it was received by Heraclius. He says, "Arabic and Greek writers agree in making 628 the year in which Muhammad's letter reached Heraclius though the following year would agree better with the tradition that he received it in Edessa, or at Jerusalem whither he had gone on pilgrimage to give thanks for his great victories...."<sup>4</sup>

The letters to Muqawqis<sup>5</sup> and Negus of Abyssinia<sup>6</sup> have survived in their original form. As regards the letter to Chosroes of Iran

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, I, ii, 162.

<sup>2</sup> Journal asiatique, 1854, pp. 482-498.; Wathā'iq, nos. 49,50.; Siyāsī Zindigī, 153.; Rise of Islam, 364-365.; ZDMG, XVII (1863), pp. 385-388., XLVIII, p. 160.; IC, 1939, pp. 427-439.

<sup>3</sup> Ḥamīdullah, "La Lettre du Prophète à Héraclius et le sort de l'original", Arabica, (1955), II, pp. 97-110; Ṣaḥīfa, 18.; Siyāsī Zindigī, 190-192.

<sup>4</sup> Rise of Islam, 365.

<sup>5</sup> Muḥabbar, 76.; Journal asiatique, 1854, pp. 482-498.; Ḥayawān, i, 98.; Wathā'iq, nos. 49,50.; Siyāsī Zindigī, 153.; Rise of Islam, 364-365, where the photocopy of the letter has been reproduced with the remark, 'Letter of the Prophet to the "Mukaukis" discovered by M. Etienne Barthélémy.'; Tab, I, ii, 16,17; Futūḥ Miṣr, 46,47.; Khitāṭ, i, 29.; Ṣubḥ, vi, 378, 467.

<sup>6</sup> Annales, i, 1569-1570.; Ṣubḥ, vi, 379, 466-467.; Wathā'iq, nos. 21,22, 23,24.; JRAS, 1940, p.54.; Amwāl 23-24.; Usd, i, 62.; Siyāsī Zindigī, 125-131.; Muḥabbar, 76.; Ḥayawān, i, 98.

it is reported that he tore it to pieces before reading its contents.<sup>1</sup> The fact, however, remains that Muḥammad wrote the letter to him.

Although serious doubts about their genuineness have been cast<sup>2</sup> and several arguments to prove their spuriousness were advanced by eminent Western scholars like Becker, Caetani, Monsieur Wiet and Dunlop<sup>3</sup>, yet the Muslim scholars consider them authentic. Dr. Ḥamīdullah forcefully asserts the genuineness of these letters.<sup>4</sup>

It cannot, however, be said with certainty that the texts of the letters mentioned in the sources are uncorrupted. The mode of expression and the language of some of the letters indicate interpolation of some later date. But despite some non-genuine materials having been crept into the text of these letters, it cannot be denied that they were despatched by the Prophet during the last few years of his life.

In addition to the letters referred to above, the Prophet is

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<sup>1</sup> Amwāl, 23.; Annales, i, 1571-1572.; Wathā'iq, no. 53. Tab, I, ii, 16.; SB, i, 27 (ʿilm).; ii, 232 (Jihād).; Musnad, i, 243, 305, iii, 133; iv, 75; Bagh, i, 132.

<sup>2</sup> Integration, 260, referring Buhl, Das Leben Muhammeds, Leipzig, 1930, 294-298.; Islamica, ii, (1926), 135-149.; Medina, 345-347.

<sup>3</sup> Siyāsī Zindigī, 126, 139, 140, 143, 144.

<sup>4</sup> Le Prophète de l'Islam, 205-207, 212-216, 254 ; IC, Oct., 1939, pp. 427-439. Ṣaḥīfa, 18.; Majallat ʿUthmāniya, vol. IX, nos. 3 & 4, 1936, pp. 109-129; Siyāsī Zindigī, 125-133 et passim.

reported to have sent messages to Mundhir b. Sāwā<sup>1</sup>, to Hawdha b. 'Alī<sup>2</sup>, to Ḥārith b. Abī Shamir al-Ghassānī<sup>3</sup>, to Hilāl, the governor of Baḥrayn<sup>4</sup> and to al-Hurmuzān.<sup>5</sup> The texts of these letters occur in almost all early sources. The letter addressed to Mundhir b. Sāwā, bearing the seal of the Prophet, has been discovered, a traced copy of which was published in ZDMG (vol. XVII, pp. 385-388) in 1863.<sup>6</sup>

The subject matter of all these letters was his invitation to the faith of Islam - a feature common in other more important despatches to the rulers outside Arabia. This fact shows that the Prophet's despatches to the rulers were motivated not only by his desire to establish contacts with the neighbouring states in order to consolidate his power in Arabia, but also by religious consideration of spreading the faith of Islam outside Arabia.

#### vi) Census:-

Another type of written material of the Prophet's age was the census record of the muslim population. Bukhārī reports that once when the Prophet wished that a census of the whole muslim population be taken, he commanded, "Write down for me the names of those who have subscribed to Islam." "Thereupon", says Ḥudhayfa, the narrator of the report, "we wrote down for him the names of one thousand and

<sup>1</sup> Tab, I, ii, 19, 27, 28.; IV, ii, 76.; Kharāj, 131.; Amwāl, 20.; Subḥ, vi, 368, 376.; Wathā'iq, nos. 56, 57, 58, 59.; Annales, i, 1600.; Futūḥ, 91.; Uyūn, ii, 266.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, I, ii, 18.; Wathā'iq, no. 68.; Futūḥ, 97.; Subḥ, vi, 379.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, I, ii, 17-18.; Annales, i, 1559.; Wathā'iq, no. 37.;

<sup>4</sup> Tab, I, ii, 27.; Wathā'iq, no. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 54.

<sup>6</sup> ZDMG, vol. XVII, 1863, pp. 385-388.



five hundred persons."<sup>1</sup> The mention of the exact figure of 1500 suggests that this census did take place, probably in 2 A.H.

vii) War records:-

As there was no standing army in Medina during the Prophet's lifetime, the names of those who were to take part in battles were written down in a register. This is apparent from the following report, found in Bukhārī's Ṣaḥīḥ and other sources:<sup>2</sup>

It is reported that once a man came to the Prophet and said, "I had enlisted myself to fight in such and such a battle, but (now) my wife wants me to accompany her in the hajj pilgrimage."<sup>3</sup> Hearing this, the Prophet exempted him from taking part in the battle and said, 'Go back and perform the hajj with your wife.'<sup>4</sup>

The above report shows that in those days a register used to be kept to enlist the volunteers of war.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to this, a register was maintained to record the spoils of war and the mode of its disbursement. The sources indicate that a special official was appointed by the Prophet to maintain such a register. Mu'ayyib b. Fāṭima is reported to have been

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<sup>1</sup> SB, ii, 263 (Jihād).; Nihāya, viii, 196.; Khiṭaṭ, i, 92.

<sup>2</sup> SB, ii, 263 (Jihād).; iii, 453-454 (Nikāḥ).; SM, ii, 596 (Hajj).; SIM, ii, 212 (Manāsik).

<sup>3</sup> The rules of hajj require a wife to accompany her husband or other near relative (mahram) during her pilgrimage.

<sup>4</sup> SB, ii, 263 (Jihād).; SIM, ii, 212 (Manāsik).

<sup>5</sup> 'Umar I, who was the first to introduce the system of official registers (dīwān) (cf. Latā'if, 14, n.2.; Khiṭaṭ, i, 92) might have found its precedent in this practice of the Prophet's time.



appointed to carry out this duty.<sup>1</sup>

viii) List of emissaries:-

Ibn Ishāq refers to a memorandum, containing the names of emissaries sent by the Prophet to the rulers of neighbouring countries. It also contained the Prophet's instructions given to these ambassadors at the time of their departure. The Egyptian Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb (d. 128 A.H.) is reported to have found this kitāb and dispatched it to Zuhri who recognised it to be genuine.<sup>2</sup>

Although we are not told of the time when this book was compiled, the possibility is that it was written down in the Prophet's own lifetime. Just as the statistical list of the muslims and the war record were prepared by the Prophet's own initiative, it was likewise probable that he himself got the list of emissaries prepared. Thus we are inclined to include this book among the official record of the Prophet's lifetime.

(c) Commercial and other transactions:-

Giving due importance to writing, the Qur'ān prescribed that every transaction on credit, whether big or small, should be written down and attested by at least two witnesses.<sup>3</sup> In presence of this commandment, it is not surprising that the Prophet, during his post migration period,<sup>4</sup> used writing in various commercial and other

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<sup>1</sup> 'Iqd, iv, 246.; Wuzarā', 12.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 972.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 2:282.

<sup>4</sup> Stress is laid on his career in Medina because the verse in question was revealed after the hijra.

transactions. The following few examples will show that some written record of the Prophet's lifetime was preserved in this form.

(i) Once when the Prophet bought a slave from Al-'Addā' b. Khālīd he put the transaction in writing. It read as follows: 'This is (a record of) what Muḥammad, the Apostle of Allāh, has purchased from Al-'Addā' b. Khālīd....'<sup>1</sup>

(ii) When the Prophet manumitted his slave named Abū Rāfi' Aslam he gave the latter a certificate to this effect. The opening sentence of the document read as follows: 'A writing from Muḥammad, the Apostle of Allāh, to his slave (bifatāhu) named Aslam. I set you free in the cause of Allāh, giving you complete freedom...."<sup>2</sup>

(iii) A certificate of manumission was given to the tribe of Abū Dumayra when they were freed by Muḥammad. Through this document, the Prophet set them free and gave them the option either to stay with him or to return to their people.<sup>3</sup>

It is reported that this kitāb was preserved in the family of Abū Dumayra till the time of the Abbasids, when Ḥusayn b. 'Abd Allāh b. Dumayra brought it to the caliph Maḥdī, who purchased it, as a relic of the Prophet, for a price of 300 dīnārs.<sup>4</sup>

(iv) The most important document of this nature was the receipt given by the Prophet for the ransom of Salmān al-Fārisī.

<sup>1</sup> SB, ii, 11, (Buyū').; Tab, VII, i, 36.; Wathā'iq, nos. 224, 224-a; SIM, ii, 32 (Tijārāt). Istī'āb, iii, 161-162. The order of the vendor and the vendee is reversed in some of these reports. The transaction, however, was committed to writing.

<sup>2</sup> Tarātīb, i, 274.; Wathā'iq, no. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Mawāhib, i, 298.; Ma'ārif, 48.; Wathā'iq, no. 244.; Isāba, ii, 214, no. 4204.; Jamharat, i, 69-70.

<sup>4</sup> Wathā'iq, no. 244, referring Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir's Al-Bad' wa't-tārikh, vol. V, p. 24.; Ma'ārif, 48.

The text of the document ran as follows: 'This is (a receipt of) what Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh, the Apostle of Allāh, paid to 'Uthmān b. al-Ashkal as ransom for Salmān al-Fārisī. (He paid to him) 300 palm trees and 40 ounces (Awqiya) of gold. (After this payment) Muḥammad, the Apostle of Allāh, is absolved of the price of Salmān al-Fārisī....'<sup>1</sup>

(d) Sermons and stray ahādīth:-

There were occasions when companions were so much impressed by the Prophet's orations that they requested that the sermon be written down and handed over to them. The most important and well known example is that of the khutba delivered by the Prophet on the occasion of the conquest of Mecca in 8 A.H. The Yemenite Abū Shāh, one of the audiences, was deeply impressed by this oration and requested the Prophet to write it down for him. His request is reported to have been granted.<sup>2</sup>

As regards the stray ahādīth, it is reported that sometimes the Prophet himself dictated certain legal traditions and sent them to various individuals or to certain tribes. To take for instance he wrote to the people of Juhayna: "Do not use the skins and muscles of such animals who die a natural death (i.e. who have not been properly slaughtered)".<sup>3</sup> Occasions also arose when a particular hadith being appealing to a companion was recorded by him in the Prophet's presence.

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<sup>1</sup> Iṣbahān, i, 52.; Bagh, i, 170.; Wathā'iq, no. 243(a).

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 86.; Bayān, i, 70.; Uṣd, ii, 384.; Sh, i, 40-41 ('Ilm); ii, 95 (Luqṭa).; iv, 318 (Diyāt).; SM, ii, 603-604 (Hajj).; Wathā'iq, no. 14(b).; Fāsil, 34a.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad, iv, 310-311.; Musnad (T), no. 1293.; Wathā'iq, no. 156.;

For example, when the latter called at 'Itbān b. Mālik and related a certain dogmatic ḥadīth, Anas liked it and asked one of his sons to record it in the Prophet's presence.<sup>1</sup>

In view of the fact that writing was freely employed by the Prophet in religious, political, administrative and commercial matters, it was quite natural that some literate companions might have become interested in recording the traditions privately. Significant in this connection is the remark made by Macdonald who says, "Above all, a record was being gathered of all the cases judged by him (the Prophet), and of his decisions; of all the answers which he gave to formal questions on religious life and faith. All this was jotted down by the companions on sahīfas - odd sheets - just as they had done in the Ignorance with the proverbs of the wise and their dark sayings."<sup>2</sup>

In fact we find reference to the literary activities of more than a dozen such companions who made private collections. The possibility is that there were other obscure scholars who kept private records of the Prophet's sunna. As all these recordings were done privately, we call it 'unofficial records of the Prophet's time'.

(ii) Unofficial recordings:-

Among the 'unofficial records of this period are the companions' personal memoranda, containing the sayings, doings and approvals of

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 94.

<sup>2</sup> Muslim Theology, .75.

the Prophet. During the Prophet's lifetime, the main concern of the companions was to regulate their lives according to the rules approved by the Prophet. His words and deeds were considered as important and valid as the Book of Allāh, for the latter was not only recited but also interpreted and explained by the Prophet. Under these circumstances, it was but natural that full heed was given to what he uttered, what he did and what he gave quasi approval to. In other words, the ahādīth were considered important right from the beginning. But since the majority of the companions were not capable of writing, it was a privilege of only a selected few to keep their own note-books (ṣaḥīfa) for recording the ahādīth. Maintaining note-books was not a new thing. We have shown that long before the advent of Islam people used to preserve the wise sayings (ḥikma) of important personalities in black and white. Muḥammad, who brought a revolutionary change in the social and ethical life of the Arabs, was much more important person in the eyes of the Bedouins. It was, therefore, quite natural that his words and actions were given due importance and were preserved not only in memory but also in black and white.

Although no official arrangement was made by the Prophet to preserve this material, yet private collections were made by many of his literate companions and successors. These collections may be discussed under the following three headings:

- (a) Ṣaḥīfa, nuskha, risāla, majāll and kitāb of the companions and the successors.
- (b) Other written records of the companions.
- (c) Other written records of the successors and early scholars.

(a) Sahīfa, muskha, etc. of the companions and the successors:

(i) 'Kitāb' of Sa'd b. 'Ubāda (d. 15 A.H.):-

Sa'd was one of those distinguished persons of Medina who held the honorific title of 'Kāmil (perfect) in pre-Islamic Arabia.<sup>1</sup> As his title implies<sup>2</sup>, he knew the art of writing even before the advent of Islam.<sup>3</sup> After Islam, this Anṣārīte Sa'd, belonging to the Khazraj tribe, employed writing for recording the traditions of the Prophet. He wrote down the ahādīth in a kitāb (book)<sup>4</sup>, which, after his death, was preserved in his family. Later, we find his son transmitting a tradition from this book.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that Sa'd was the author of more than one book. This is suggested by Ibn Hibbān, who, in the biographical note about Ismā'īl b. 'Amr, says, "He (Ismā'īl) was the brother of Sa'īd b. 'Amr, who had received the books (kutub) of Sa'd b. 'Ubāda al-Anṣārī by way of wijāda (sāhib al-wijādāt min kutub Sa'd b. 'Ubāda...)."<sup>6</sup> The word 'kutub' in the report clearly indicates that Sa'd possessed several volumes, which reached Sa'īd b. 'Amr, one of his descendants.

(2) 'Kitāb' of Mu'adh b. Jabal (d. 18 A.H.):-

Mu'adh b. Jabal, the famous governor of Yemen, was an authority

<sup>1</sup> The reputed 'perfect men' (kumalā', plural of kāmil) of pre-Islamic Arabia were: Rāfi' b. Mālik, Sa'd b. 'Ubāda, Usayd b. Ḥuḍayr, 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy, Aws b. Khawālī, Suwayd b. aṣ-Ṣāmit and Ḥuḍayr al-Katā'ib. (cf. Futūḥ, 459-460.; Ṭab, III, ii, 91, 142, et passim.)

<sup>2</sup> In pre-Islamic Arabia, those who combined the knowledge of the art of writing, swimming and archery were known as kāmil. (cf. Ṭab, III, ii, 91.; Futūḥ, 459.)

<sup>3</sup> Ṭab, III, ii, 142.; Ma'ārif, 87.

<sup>4</sup> Umm, vii, 112.; Mst, ii, 9-10/22-23.

<sup>5</sup> Mst, ii, 9-10/22-23.; Jāmi', vi, 89 (Aḥkām), where we read: 'a son of Sa'd b. 'Ubāda told me that he found in the kitāb of Sa'd that....'; Musnad, v, 285.; Ta'jīl, 36, 314.

<sup>6</sup> Mashāhīr, 130, no. 1024.

on traditions and law.<sup>1</sup> He used to hold ḥadīth sessions in the mosques of Damascus and Ḥims.<sup>2</sup> He was also seen busy teaching religion in Yemen, where the Kufan jurist Shurayḥ had learnt the fiqh from him.<sup>3</sup>

He was in possession of a kitāb, containing legal traditions, which was handed over to him by the Prophet at the time of his appointment as governor of Yemen.<sup>4</sup> This booklet later came in possession of Mūsā b. Ṭalḥa.<sup>5</sup>

He is also credited with a nuskha, containing the traditions, which, after his death, came in possession of Ibn 'Ā'idh.<sup>6</sup>

(3) 'Kitāb' of 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 32 A.H.):—

Ibn Mas'ūd, one of the six jurists (fuqahā') acceptable to the Ḥanafites,<sup>7</sup> was an eminent scholar of Kufa, where he was sent by the caliph 'Umar as a teacher.<sup>8</sup> He held regular ḥadīth sessions in the city mosque.<sup>9</sup> The place where he used to hold his classes was traceable until 345 A.H. when it was shown to Ḥākim an-Naysābūrī during his visit to Kufa.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tdh, i, 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 957.; Ḥilya, v, 121, 130.; Tdh, i, 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> Minhāj, iv, 142.

<sup>4</sup> Sīra, 886-887, 956-957.; Ḥilya, i, 240-241.; Amwāl, 27, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad, v, 228.

<sup>6</sup> Fāsil, 56a.

<sup>7</sup> Āthār, 212.

<sup>8</sup> Tdh, i, 14.; Khifā', ii, 16.; Minhāj, iv, 142, 157.

<sup>9</sup> Ṭab, III, i, 110.; Ma'rifat, 191-192.

<sup>10</sup> Ma'rifat, 191-192.



Ibn Mas'ūd is generally considered as an opponent of ḥadīth writing. He is said to have effaced a book brought to him for his perusal.<sup>1</sup> But alongside this report we come across the statement of his son, given on oath, that he possessed a book in his father's own handwriting.<sup>2</sup> This shows that Ibn Mas'ūd used to write down the aḥādīth privately, but, like other careful scholars, he discouraged this practice for fear that the actual words of the Prophet may not be recorded. This is quite understandable in view of the fact that Ibn Mas'ūd was exceptionally cautious in narrating the ḥadīth and sometimes trembled while ascribing any words in the direct form of narration to the Prophet.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the kitāb referred to above, Ibn Mas'ūd possessed a few aḥādīth, sent to him, in written form, by Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī.<sup>4</sup>

(4) 'Kitāb' of Abū Rāfi' (d. 36 A.H.):—

Abū Rāfi' Aslam, the servant of the Prophet, used to narrate aḥādīth to the companions and the successors. He possessed a booklet (kitāb) which contained the traditions concerning prayer. It was handed over by him to Abū Bakr b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith b. Hishām.<sup>5</sup>

It is reported that 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās used to visit him and enquired about the Prophet's sayings and actions. When Abū Rāfi' narrated the traditions, Ibn 'Abbās either himself wrote them down or

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<sup>1</sup> Bayān, i, 62-65.; Taqyīd, 25, 38-39.; 53-56.

<sup>2</sup> The son is said to have shown this kitāb to Ma'n. (cf. Bayān, i, 72.).

<sup>3</sup> Tdh, i, 14-15.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad, iv, 396, 414.

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 39.

asked his slave to do so.<sup>1</sup> This shows that Abū Rēfi' not only made his own collection of aḥādīth but he used to dictate them to others as well.

(5) 'Saḥīfa' of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40 A.H.):—

The fourth caliph, an eminent jurist, and one of the scribes of the Prophet, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was a staunch advocate of writing. He not only himself wrote but encouraged others to do likewise. It is reported that al-Ḥārith b. A'war<sup>2</sup> and Ḥujr b. 'Adī<sup>3</sup> had bought some writing material on 'Alī's exhortation and got written few traditions by the latter. While his cousin 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās was in possession of his legal decisions in writing<sup>4</sup>, there were others who had derived aḥādīth from him in written form. Among these may be mentioned 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ,<sup>5</sup> Khilās b. 'Amr al-Ḥajarī<sup>6</sup> and Sha'bī.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from being the Prophet's scribe who wrote on the former's behalf, 'Alī himself employed writing freely. In addition to the report that he had given some written aḥādīth to al-Ḥārith b. al-A'war<sup>8</sup>, it is reported that during the battle of Ṣiffīn, he agreed to consign to writing the terms and conditions for cessation of hostilities

<sup>1</sup> Tagyīd, 91-92.; Tarātīb, ii, 247.; Ṭab, II, ii, 123.; Isāba, ii, no. 4781.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, VI, 116.; Tagyīd, 90.; Fāṣil, 35a.

<sup>3</sup> Ṭab, VI, 154.

<sup>4</sup> Sh, i, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Jarḥ, (Intr.), 130.

<sup>6</sup> Mizān, i, 658, no. 2532.; Tahdh, iii, 176-177.; Jarḥ, I, ii, 402.

<sup>7</sup> Jarḥ (Intr.), 130.

<sup>8</sup> Ṭab, VI, 116.

between him and Mu'āwīya.<sup>1</sup> In 37 A.H., he gave a fresh written charter to the people of Najrān.<sup>2</sup> In addition to all these, he wrote letters on various occasions.

As regards the written ahādīth with 'Alī, it is reported, on his own testimony,<sup>3</sup> that he possessed a ṣahīfa,<sup>4</sup> which contained among other things, the laws regarding blood money, manumission of slaves and the prohibition to kill a muslim in retaliation of an unbeliever.<sup>5</sup> He kept this ṣahīfa, after the fashion of the day, in the scabbard (qirāb or batn) of his sword.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the sources mention several ṣahīfas attached to his sword. The contents of these ṣahīfas included the rates of taxes on camels, the boundaries of Medina as a sanctuary (ḥaram), some extracts from the constitution of Medina and the Prophet's sermon given on the farewell pilgrimage.<sup>7</sup>

On the basis of the information provided by earlier sources about the contents of the ṣahīfa, we can say that the document

<sup>1</sup> Tab, III, ii, 21.; Annales, i, 3336-3338.; Tiwāl, 194-196.; War and Peace, 101.; Wathā'iq, no. 372.

<sup>2</sup> Kharāj, 42.; Wathā'iq, no. 104. The original document to them was issued by the Prophet (cf. Kharāj, 41.; Amwāl, 188-189.; Tab, I, ii, 35-36, 85.; Futūḥ, 76-77.; Wathā'iq, no. 94.), and was ratified by his successors, Abū Bakr (cf. Amwāl, 189.; Kharāj, 41.; Annales, i, 1987-1988) and 'Umar (cf. Kharāj, 41-42.; Tab, I, ii 85.; Wathā'iq, no. 100.)

<sup>3</sup> SB, iv, 324 (Diyāt).; Tagyīd, 88-89.; Musnad (Ṭ), 15.

<sup>4</sup> SB, iv, 289 (Farā'id), iv, 324 (Diyāt).; Jāmi', vi, 181-182 (Diyāt)

<sup>5</sup> Musnad (Ṭ), 15.; Bayān, i, 76.; SB, iv, 324 (Diyāt).; Umm, vii, 164 (Diyāt), 292 (Diyāt ahl adh-dhimma).; Musnad (Shaf.), ii, 104 (Diyāt).; Mohammedanism (Mar.), 65.

<sup>6</sup> Umm, vi, 3.; SB, iv, 425 (I'tisām...).; IQ, 5.; Mohammedanism (Mar.), 65.

<sup>7</sup> SB, ii, 296, 298 (Jizya).; iv, 425 (I'tisām...).; Musnad (Shaf.) ii, 104 (Diyāt).; Muslim Ethics, 47-48.; Bayān, i, 171.; Tagyīd, 86-89.; Mst, ii, 14-16/27-28.; Tawjīh, 10-18.

consisted of one or just a few sheets and the word ṣaḥīfa did not refer to a booklet or a book.

It is possible, as Dr. Ḥamīdullah suggests, that these documents belonged originally to the Prophet himself and after his death came into 'Alī's possession.<sup>1</sup> This assumption is based on the information that 'Alī was in possession of the Prophet's sword, named Dhū'l fiḥār<sup>2</sup>, to which was attached the constitution of Medina.<sup>3</sup> 'Alī, his cousin and son-in-law, being an important member of the Prophet's family, was the most likely person to have received the document found in the Prophet's house.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, since the contents of 'Alī's ṣaḥīfa partly included many phrases from the Constitution of Medina, it is thought quite logically by Dr. Ḥamīdullah that the ṣaḥīfa attached to 'Alī's sword was in fact the same ṣaḥīfa which used to be tied with the Prophet's sword.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the ṣaḥīfa referred to above, 'Alī is said to have possessed a kitāb (booklet) on zakāt and taxation,<sup>6</sup> dictated to him by the Prophet.<sup>7</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya seems to have referred to this book when he said, "My father, 'Alī, asked me to take this kitāb to 'Uthmān for it contained the Prophet's instructions with respect to zakāt."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ṣaḥīfa, 30-31.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, I, ii, 171-172.; Ashrāf, i, 525.

<sup>3</sup> Ṣaḥīfa, 30-31.; Imtā', i, 107.; Buḥūth, 147,n.; Ṭab, I, ii, 172.; II, i, 19.

<sup>4</sup> Imtā', i, 107.

<sup>5</sup> Ṣaḥīfa, 30-31.

<sup>6</sup> SB, ii, 277 (Fard al-khums).; Musnad, i, 141.; Ta'ayīd, 88-89.

<sup>7</sup> SB, ii, 277. (Fard al-khums).

<sup>8</sup> SB, ii, 277 (Fard al-khums).

(6) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of Muḥammad b. Maslama (d. 46 A.H.):—

Muḥammad b. Maslama was a reliable transmitter of ḥadīth, who, on two occasions - once in Abū Bakr's time<sup>1</sup> and secondly during 'Umar's reign<sup>2</sup> - acted as a witness to prove the authenticity of the traditions reported by Mughīra b. Shu'ba.

As regards his written collection of ahādīth, it is reported that a ṣaḥīfa containing traditions was found after his death in the scabbard of his sword.<sup>3</sup>

(7) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of Hujr b. 'Adī (d. 51 A.H.):—

Hujr was a pious theologian whose main interest lay in the ḥadīth. He was very much admired by 'Ā'isha.<sup>4</sup> He belonged to the disciples of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib from whom he had collected a number of traditions. These ahādīth were preserved in a ṣaḥīfa.<sup>5</sup>

(8) 'Ṣuḥuf' of Abū 'l-Yasar Ka'b b. 'Amr:—

Alū 'l-Yasar is said to have possessed a large number of manuscript sheets (ṣuḥuf), which he used to keep in a ḍimāma.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When Mughīra quoted a ḥadīth regarding the grandmother's share in the property of the deceased, Abū Bakr demanded a witness who could confirm that it was the Prophet's tradition. Thereupon, Muḥammad b. Maslama verified Mughīra's statement. (cf. Tdh, i, 3.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 296-297.).

<sup>2</sup> It is reported that Mughīra reported a ḥadīth concerning the diya (blood money) for foeticide. In order to verify Mughīra's reported ḥadīth, 'Umar demanded a witness, whereupon Muḥammad b. Maslama came forward and confirmed Mughīra's report. (cf. SB, iv, 325. (Diyāt).; SAD, iv, 266 (Diyāt), ḥadīth no. 4570.; Tdh, i, 8.).

<sup>3</sup> Faṣil, 56a.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, VI, 152-153.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VI, 154.

<sup>6</sup> One of the many containers used for keeping documents. For the list of these containers, see, Supra, chapter IV, p.220, n.2.

Although the sources tell us that this container was full of manuscripts<sup>1</sup>, they do not indicate the subject matter of the suhuf contained therein. In view of the fact that Abū 'l-Yasar was a distinguished scholar of ḥadīth, we can safely expect these manuscripts to be nothing but ḥadīth collections.

That Abū 'l-Yasar was a scholar of ḥadīth is evident from a report saying that he was sought after by the traditionists,<sup>2</sup> 'Ubāda b. al-Walīd (d. circa 98 A.H.) and his father Walīd b. 'Ubāda. According to the report, these two scholars, who had set out in search of the ḥadīth among the Anṣār, were first benefitted by Abū 'l-Yasar<sup>3</sup> who was found accompanied by his servant carrying the dimāma, full of suhuf.<sup>4</sup>

(9) 'Kitāb' of 'Amr b. Ḥazm al-Anṣārī (d. 51 A.H.):-

'Amr was in possession of a written treatise on legal matters which was given to him by the Prophet at the time of his appointment as the governor of Najrān. It contained laws regarding alms, blood money, inheritance and other matters relating to the Prophet's sunna (as-sadaqāt wa'd-diyāt wa 'l-farā'id wa 's-sunan).<sup>5</sup>

The sources mention this treatise as a 'kitāb' which may be

<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 188, citing Ibn al-Qaysarānī's Kitāb al-Jam' bayn kitābay Abi Naṣr Kalābādhi wa Abi Bakr al-Iṣbahānī...fi riḥāl al-Bukhārī wa Muslim, (Hyderabad, 1323/1905), pp. 430-431.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, v, 57-58.; Jarḥ, III, i, 95-96.

<sup>3</sup> Jarḥ, III, ii, 160.; SM, iv, 357 (Ilm); Isāba, iv, 221, no. 1254.

<sup>4</sup> Papyri, ii, 188.

<sup>5</sup> Sīra, 961.; Bayān, i, 71.; Taqyīd, 72.; Ikhtilāf, 17-18.; SN, viii, 56-61 (Qasāma); Umm, vi, 103.; Kharāj, 42.; Amwāl, 358-362; Annales, i, 1727-1729.; Imtā', i, 501-502.; Bagh, viii, 228.; Muwatta', iv, 175-176 (Uqūl).

translated both as 'letter' and a 'booklet'. Looking at various subjects with which it dealt, it appears that it was rather a 'booklet' than merely a 'letter'. Furthermore, looking at the treatment received by one of the themes of this 'kitāb', and believing that similar treatment must have been received by other subjects as well, we come to the conclusion that this 'kitāb' was more than a letter and was most probably a treatise. We find that the 'kitāb al-Jarāh' (section dealing with compensation for wounds) of this 'kitāb' not only contained the Prophet's rulings on the matter but also many verses from the Holy Qur'ān. The section began with the statement: 'These are the rules laid down by Allāh and His Prophet (hādha bayān min Allāh wa rasūlihī)',<sup>1</sup> followed by a number of verses from the Qur'ān<sup>2</sup>. After this is given the chapter heading entitled 'This is the chapter on wounds (hādha kitāb al-Jarāh)', followed by legal rules concerning wounds.<sup>3</sup>

It can be presumed that the plan followed in the chapter on Jarāh must have been followed with regard to other subjects as well. This, in turn, makes us believe that the document dealing with at least four legal topics viz. blood money, alms, inheritance and taxes was not merely a 'letter' but at least a 'booklet' if not a 'book'.

The above 'booklet', written on a piece of leather (ruq'at min adam) remained preserved in 'Amr's family for many years. It is reported that the caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz who, with a view

<sup>1</sup> SN, viii, 59. (Qasāma).; Sīra, 961.; Kharāj, 42.; Wathā'iq, no.105

<sup>2</sup> The verses quoted were: 5:1-4.

<sup>3</sup> SN, viii, 59 (Qasāma).



to secure authentic documents concerning the Prophet's sunna, was in correspondance with different families known to have been in possession of such manuscripts, had written to Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm, as well. The caliph in this letter had enquired from Abū Bakr if he had with him some written ahādīth of the Prophet concerning zakāt.<sup>1</sup> A similar letter was sent by the caliph to the family of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭab. According to the reports, the required documents were found both in the families of 'Umar and 'Amr b. Ḥazm.<sup>2</sup> The document found in the family of 'Umar was an epistle on zakāt, which was prepared by 'Umar for the guidance of his governors.<sup>3</sup> As regards the manuscript found in 'Amr's family, it was the same kitāb which was given by the Prophet to his governor 'Amr b. Ḥazm in 10 A.H. when he was sent to Najrān to instruct the Yemenites and to collect alms tax from them.

As the contents of these manuscripts - both dealing with zakāt - were the same, caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, during his reign, issued a circular order to the effect that legal cases should be dealt with in the light of these writings.<sup>4</sup>

The incidental reference to 'Amr b. Ḥazm's kitāb in the above report points to the existence of such a manuscript with him. This, book, it seems, was preserved in 'Amr's family for quite a long time, for we read, on the testimony of Zuhri, that he had found 'Amr's book in possession of the latter's grandson Abū Bakr, from whom he took and read it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sunan Daro. (Zakāt al-ibil wa 'l-ghanam).

<sup>2</sup> SAD, ii, 133 (Zakāt).; SN, viii, 59 (Qasāma).

<sup>3</sup> Amwāl, 362, 363, 366, 379 et passim.; SAD, ii, 133 (Zakāt).

<sup>4</sup> Sunan Daro. ("(Zakāt al-ibil)).

<sup>5</sup> SN, viii, 59 (Qasāma).

References to this book are found in other sources as well. It is said, for instance, that the book of 'Amr b. Ḥazm has attained recognition with all the four imāms (i.e. Abū Ḥanīfa, Shāfi'ī, Mālik and Ibn Ḥanbal) and that it has been continually transmitted from one generation to another like the book of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, transmitted by 'Amr b. Shuʿayb, on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather.<sup>1</sup> In Ibn Kathīr's words, "This book was commonly used by the scholars of the past and the present who have placed their reliance in its contents."<sup>2</sup> Speaking about this book, Yaʿqūb b. Sufyān says, "No book in my knowledge is more reliable than the book of 'Amr b. Ḥazm, (for) the companions used to refer to it and change their individual considered opinions (ra'y) [if they clashed with the rulings found in this book]."<sup>3</sup> Shāfi'ī quotes a report showing that 'Umar I was one of those who had done so. According to this report 'Umar once decided a case regarding the weregild of fingers on the basis of a Prophet's tradition, saying: 'the compensation for wounds in the thumb is fifteen camels, in the forefinger and middle finger ten camels each, in the ring finger nine camels and in the little finger six camels'. But later on when he found a tradition saying: 'the compensation for wounds in any of the fingers is ten camels', he changed his earlier decision in the light of this ḥadīth.<sup>4</sup> This second ḥadīth, the report adds, was found in the book (kitāb) handed over to 'Amr b. Ḥazm by the Prophet.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Naṣb, iii, 342.

<sup>2</sup> Tanqīḥ, ii, 351.

<sup>3</sup> Tanqīḥ, ii, 351.

<sup>4</sup> Ikhtilāf, 17-18.

<sup>5</sup> Ikhtilāf, 18.

This incidental reference to the kitāb of 'Amr provides sufficient evidence for the existence of a ḥadīth manuscript with 'Amr b. Ḥazm.

In addition to the book referred to above, 'Amr was in possession of a kitāb containing the rules regarding the zakāt on animals and crops, rules concerning booty, blood money and prayer, and a list of actions considered as major sins (kabā'ir).<sup>1</sup> An incidental reference to this kitāb is found in the report saying, "Aṭā' b. Rabāḥ had read the ḥadīth 'the ablution is not complete without al-madmada (rinsing the mouth) and al-istinshāq (throwing the water up into the nostrils and blowing it back)' in the kitāb of Ibn Ḥazm given to him by the Prophet."<sup>2</sup>

In fact 'Amr had collected together twenty-one official documents of the Prophet which he received from time to time. These he had edited along with the book on zakāt referred to above. This compilation of 'Amr has been well preserved in Ibn Ṭulūn's book "I'lām as-sā'ilīn 'an kutub sayyid al-mursalīn" in the form of an appendix. The compendium ascribed to 'Amr b. Ḥazm has been transmitted by a reputed traditionist of Daybul (present Thatta, in Pakistan) named Abū Ja'far ad-Daybulī.<sup>3</sup>

(10) 'Suhuf' of Shamghūn al-Azdī al-Anṣārī:-

The companion, Shamghūn was an advocate of writing, who used to write on both sides of the papyrus. He is said to be the first who bound the loose sheets by pressing and sewing them together.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ṭab, I, ii, 19.; Wathā'iq, no. 110-C.

<sup>2</sup> Fāṣil, 58a.

<sup>3</sup> I'lām, 48-52.

<sup>4</sup> Isāba, ii, 156, no. 3921.

His written collection of ahādīth was known as 'ṣuḥuf'.<sup>1</sup>

(11) 'Nuskha' of Samura b. Jundub (d. 59 A.H.):—

Samura b. Jundub (d. 59/60 A.H.) is reported to have collected the ahādīth in a book called 'nuskha'.<sup>2</sup> It was also known as 'ṣaḥīfa',<sup>3</sup> 'risāla',<sup>4</sup> and 'kitāb'.<sup>5</sup> The collection was received by his son, Sulaymān<sup>6</sup>, and by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī<sup>7</sup>, both of whom are reported to have transmitted the ahādīth from it. Of Sulaymān it is said that 'he transmitted from his father a lengthy book (rawā 'an abīhi nuskha kabīra)'.<sup>8</sup> According to another report this nuskha was handed over to him by his father in written form.<sup>9</sup> Ibn Sīrīn, who praised this book<sup>10</sup>, states that 'the risāla which Samura wrote for his sons contained much ḥadīth (ḥilm kathīr)'.<sup>11</sup>

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī had also transmitted Samura's collection of ahādīth.<sup>12</sup> In Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān's words, "the ahādīth of Samura transmitted by al-Ḥasan are said to have come from a kitāb."<sup>13</sup> Marwān b. Ja'far b. Sa'd b. Samura is also reported to have received Samura's ḥadīth in written form.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isāba, ii, 156, no. 3921.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, iv, 198.

<sup>3</sup> Mst, ii, 10/23.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, iv, 236.; Mst, ii, 10/23.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VII, i, 115. The 'nuskha' and 'risāla' of Samura, mentioned in the sources, apparently look two independent works of Samura, but most probably they are identical, as is suggested by Goldziher. cf. Mst, ii, 10/23.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, iv, 198.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, VII, i, 115.; Tahdh, ii, 267-269.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, iv, 198.

<sup>9</sup> Tahdh, iv, 236-237.

<sup>10</sup> Tahdh, iv, 236.

<sup>11</sup> Tahdh, iv, 236-237.

<sup>12</sup> Tab, VII, i, 115.; Tahdh, ii, 267.

<sup>13</sup> Tab, VII, i, 115.

<sup>14</sup> Jarh, IV, i, 276.

Thus we see that Samura's written collection is known through the statements of his own pupils and pupils of these pupils.

(12) 'Kutub' of Abū Hurayra (d. 59 A.H.):—

Abū Hurayra came from Yemen to Medina and embraced Islam in 7 A.H. Since then till Muḥammad's death he remained constantly in the Prophet's company and seized thereby an opportunity to collect the traditions. He himself claims to have recounted the greatest number of aḥādīth.<sup>1</sup> The Prophet had also confirmed that Abū Hurayra was the most anxious student of traditions.<sup>2</sup>

Although he is acknowledged to have reported the largest number of aḥādīth, opinions differ about his written collection of traditions.

According to one report, Abū Hurayra is said to have admitted himself that he did not write down the aḥādīth.<sup>3</sup> Comparing himself with his fellow companion, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, he is reported to have said, "Among all the companions of the Prophet there is none who had transmitted a greater number of aḥādīth than myself except 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, who used to write them down while I did not do so."<sup>4</sup> In another report, he is said to have stated, "We neither write nor dictate traditions".<sup>5</sup> It is

<sup>1</sup> He is said to have transmitted 5374 aḥādīth. (cf. Tadrib, 205.; Tahdith, 47-48.)

<sup>2</sup> SB, i, 37 (Ilm).; iv, 245 (Riqāʿ).

<sup>3</sup> Ilm, 11a.

<sup>4</sup> Tacyīd, 82-84.; Bayān, i, 70.; SB, i, 41 (Ilm).; Fāsil, 34b, 35a.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, i, 66.; Ilm, 11a.

further reported that Abū Hurayra, along with his other colleagues, was discouraged by the Prophet to write down the traditions.<sup>1</sup>

All these reports show that Abū Hurayra was not in favour of writing down aḥādīth. But alongside these, we find many reports showing his favourable attitude towards recording of the Prophet's ḥadīth.

We find, for example, a report on Abū Hurayra's own authority, saying that he possessed so much written material (of ḥadīth) that it might fill five bags.<sup>2</sup> It is also reported that he had acquired the knowledge of reading and writing<sup>3</sup> and had learnt even Persian<sup>4</sup> and Abyssinian.<sup>5</sup> The most important report in this connection is found in Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's Jāmi' Bayān al-'ilm, where it is mentioned that once Abū Hurayra took Ḥasan b. 'Amr b. Umayya ad-Damrī to his house and showed him many books (kutuban kathīra) containing the Prophet's aḥādīth.<sup>6</sup> Again, it is reported that he showed his books of aḥādīth to Ibn Wahb.<sup>7</sup>

Two explanations can be offered to explain the above contradictory reports regarding Abū Hurayra's written records of the Prophet's traditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 33-35.

<sup>2</sup> Hilya, i, 381.; Fāsil, 66a.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 33-34.

<sup>4</sup> Sunan(B), vii, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 439.

<sup>6</sup> Bayān, i, 74.; Also see Tarātīb, ii, 246.

<sup>7</sup> Fath, i, 148.

Firstly, the report about the Prophet's forbidding Abū Hurayra to write down his ḥadīth seems strange in the presence of the well known ḥadīth in which the Prophet pays compliments to Abū Hurayra by acknowledging him as the most anxious student of traditions.<sup>1</sup> However, this interdiction, if there was one, has been well explained by Ḥamīdullah. He states that Abū Hurayra had come from Yemen where the 'Musnad' and not the Arabic script was in vogue. Since he had learnt the Arabic script recently and must have been making mistakes, the Prophet did not trust him. Furthermore, he was not well versed in the Qur'ān and could hardly distinguish between the words of God and of Muḥammad, at least in the beginning. Hence the interdiction. But when this condition no more existed and Abū Hurayra became well versed in the Arabic language and proficient enough in religious studies, he was permitted to write.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, it looks that the contradictory reports represent two stages of Abū Hurayra's literary career. These stages can be described as (i) earlier and (ii) later. We discuss them one by one.

(i) Earlier Stage:

In the former earlier stage, Abū Hurayra possessed a powerful retentive memory. Being too confident of his memorisation power, he decided to preserve all the Prophetic traditions in the safe depository of heart, instead of writing them down. This does not mean that he was against writing. We have seen that while comparing his knowledge of ḥadīth with that of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, he did not discredit the latter for recording the aḥādīth. He

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<sup>1</sup> SB, i, 37 (ʿilm).; iv, 245 (Riqāʿ).; Tab, IV, ii, 56.

<sup>2</sup> Sahīfa, 37...



simply said that 'Abd Allāh wrote the traditions while he himself did not write. The statement does not show his aversion towards writing. In it, he merely seems boasting of his powerful memory; not disapproving of writing as such.

Perhaps the story of his refusal to dictate the aḥādīth to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and the latter's resort to trickery in order to have them written down,<sup>1</sup> belongs to this 'earlier stage' of his literary career.

Abū Hurayra's reluctance to dictate the aḥādīth may also be due to 'Umar's fear who had warned the former of severe punishment if he did not refrain from paying too much importance to ḥadīth.<sup>2</sup> 'Umar's prohibitive order, however, remained operative only till his death, after which Abū Hurayra again concentrated on ḥadīth and

<sup>1</sup> According to the story, Marwān placed his secretary Abū 'z-Za'za'a behind a curtain and then requested Abū Hurayra to relate traditions. While the latter transmitted the traditions orally, the secretary wrote them down in black and white and thus made a written collection of Abū Hurayra's ḥadīth. (cf. Taqyīd, 41.; Nubalā', ii, 431-432.; Kunā, 33.; Iṣāba, iv, 205, no. 1190.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 81-82.; Papyri, ii, 20.) The sources indicate that this was a large collection of ḥadīth, for the secretary is reported to have said that he had written a large number of aḥādīth (katabtu ḥadīthan kathīra) that day. (cf. Nubalā', ii, 431-432.).

Perhaps this collection of Abū Hurayra's ḥadīth had reached 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān, whose interest in the ḥadīth was so great that he has been listed among the traditionists. It is reported that he had asked the well known traditionist, Kāṭir b. Murra, to record for him the traditions of the well known companions excepting those of Abū Hurayra whose transmitted aḥādīth, he said, he already had. (cf. Tab, VII, ii, 157.; Papyri, ii, 20.; Buhūth, 149.; Ṣaḥīfa, 39, where Ḥamīdullah wrongly ascribes this anecdote to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz.)

This report suggests that 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān must have obtained from his father the collection of Abū Hurayra's ḥadīth which was made through trickery.

<sup>2</sup> Manār, X, 849.; Tdh, i, 7.; Fāsil, 66a.

held lectures and seminars (majālis).<sup>1</sup>

(ii) Later stage:

The second stage of Abū Hurayra's literary career began with the decline in his power of memorisation and also with the death of 'Umar. When his memory weakened and also when 'Umar's fear ceased to exist, he preferred to commit the traditions into writing. It was in this later part of his life, perhaps, that he collected the traditions in books.

That Abū Hurayra was in favour of ḥadīth recording is evident from the fact that his students not only made written collections of his ḥadīth but presented them to him for perusal and to obtain his permission to transmit them on his authority. Furthermore, we are told that his ḥadīth sessions in Medina had attracted a large number of pupils, who made written collections of ḥadīth from his lectures.<sup>2</sup> Thus the well known scholars, like Hammām b. Munabbih<sup>3</sup>, Bashīr b. Nahik<sup>4</sup>, 'Aqba b. Abī 'l-Ḥasnā<sup>5</sup>, Muḥammad b. Sīrīn<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Musnad, ii, 275.; Tdh, i, 31-35.; Nubalā', ii, 433-434, 436, 440, 443-444.; Papyri, ii, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Musnad, ii, 275.; Tdh, i, 31-35.; Nubalā', ii, 434-435, 436, 440, 443-444.;

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, ii, 14.; Isti'āb, iv, 209. His ḥadīth collection, known as 'Ṣaḥīfa' has been discovered and edited by Dr. Ḥamīdullah. (cf. Ḥamīdullah (ed.) Ṣaḥīfa Hammām b. Munabbih, Damascus, 1372/1953.)

<sup>4</sup> He collected the traditions in a book and presented it to Abū Hurayra, seeking his permission to transmit on his authority. The permission was readily given. (cf. Ṭab, VII, i, 162.; 'Ilm, 11a-11b, Bayān, i, 72.; SD, i, 127.; Tagyīd, 101.; Tahdh, i, 470.)

<sup>5</sup> His ḥadīth collection is known as 'nuskha', a copy of which was in possession of Dhahabī. (cf. Nizān, iii, 85, no. 5685.)

<sup>6</sup> His ḥadīth collection, known as 'kitāb' came in possession of Yahyā b. Sīrīn. It was written on an old parchment. There were circles after every ten ahādīth. It also contained sayings of Abū Hurayra separately. (cf. Imlā', 173.)

and Sa'īd al-Maqbūrī,<sup>1</sup> have all made written compendia of ḥadīth from him.

Under these circumstances it does not seem improbable that Abū Hurayra himself possessed some written collection of ahādīth. The report that he had shown a number of books to Ḥasan b. 'Amr b. Umayya cannot, therefore, be outrightly rejected. On the contrary, the report suggests that although he used to narrate orally, he possessed written manuscripts with him. This is apparent from his remark, 'If you (Ḥasan b. 'Amr) had heard this tradition from me, it should be in written form with me.' This becomes clearer when we read the whole report according to which he caught hold of Ḥasan's arms, took him to his house and showed him a large number of books, one of which contained the ḥadīth in question.<sup>2</sup>

A corroborative evidence for the existence of Abū Hurayra's books is his statement in which he says, "I have enough written material to fill five bags"<sup>3</sup> - a statement which was, perhaps, made during the second 'later stage' of his literary career when he had preferred writing over memory.

In the light of the above observations, we may maintain that Abū Hurayra was not only not illiterate as suggested by some,<sup>4</sup> but he had written books. Browne lists him among the literates of the first century and remarks, "Manuscript notes, however,

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, ix, 342.; Jarh, I, ii, 85.; Tdh, i, 110.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 74.; Tarātīb, ii, 246.

<sup>3</sup> Hilya, i, 381.; Fāsil, 66a.

<sup>4</sup> Papyri, ii, 9, 47, 37, 61.

were constantly made at an earlier date, during the first century of the Flight, by such men as Abū Hurayra, 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣī, az-Zuhri... and Ḥasan of Baṣra, who in some cases ordered that these notes should be burned at their death, because they were mere aids to memory...."<sup>1</sup>

(13) 'Kitāb' of Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm (d. 63 A.H.):—

The successor scholar, Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm has been described as a learned faqīh.<sup>2</sup> He transmitted the traditions from 'Umar, 'Amr b. al-Āṣ and his own father, 'Amr b. Ḥazm, the famous governor of Najrān.<sup>3</sup>

He is credited with a book on blood money (kitāb fī'l-ugūl).<sup>4</sup> But it appears that it was the same book which was sent by the Prophet to 'Amr b. Ḥazm, his father.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> History of Persia, i, 272.

<sup>2</sup> Asmā', I, i, 89.

<sup>3</sup> Asmā', I, i, 89.

<sup>4</sup> Papyri, ii, 29, n. 229.

<sup>5</sup> Sīra, 961.; Bayān, i, 71.; Tagyīd, 72.; SN, viii, 56-61 (Qasāma); Kharāj, 42.; Amwāl, 358-362.; Annales, i, 1727-1729; Intā', i, 501-502.

(14) 'Sahīfa' of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Ās (d. 63 A.H.):—

'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Ās, a scholar companion, not only knew Arabic but could read Syriac<sup>1</sup> and was given to intensive study of the books of the scripturians (ahl al-kitāb)<sup>2</sup>. He is said to have had doctrinal discussions with the converted Jews<sup>3</sup> and had compiled a voluminous book entitled 'sahīfa yarmūkiya'<sup>4</sup> on the basis of his study of Christian and Jewish literature.<sup>5</sup>

Being a pious literate muslim, he was keenly interested in the Prophet's sunna. He not only heard the traditions but committed them to writing. Perhaps he began to make his own collection after he came to know that his fellow companions were doing the same.<sup>6</sup> His famous collection, containing the sayings and doings of Muḥammad, is known as "aṣ-ṣahīfa aṣ-ṣādīqa" (the truthful record).<sup>7</sup> It is reported that he used to record everything that he heard from the Prophet<sup>8</sup>, so much so that some of his colleagues objected to his recording. They said that the Prophet was after all a man who might say something not worth recording. Hearing this, 'Abd Allāh refrained from writing. But when he consulted the Prophet on this matter and sought his permission to record his sayings, the latter

<sup>1</sup> Tab, VII, ii, 189.

<sup>2</sup> SD, ii, 212.; Hilyā, i, 288.; Nubalā', iii, 57.; Musnad, ii, 183, 209, 219, 222.; Musnad (Sh), ix, 233-234.; Tafsīr, xii, 252-253.; Usd, iii, 233.

<sup>3</sup> Tafsīr, xiii, 164.; Hilyā, vi, 52, 54.; Papyri, ii, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Tadwīn Hadīth, 67.; Sahīfa, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad, ii, 195.; Tdh, i, 36.; Nubalā', iii, 54.; Futūḥ Miṣr, i, 35. Annales, i, 464-465.; Usd, iii, 233.

<sup>6</sup> Fāsil, 36a. For details, see supra, chapter IV, p 214-215.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, II, ii, 125.; IV, ii, 8-9.; VII, ii, 189.; SD, i, 127.; Taqyīd, 84.; Nubalā', iii, 58.; Fāsil, 34b.; Ma'ārif, 156.

<sup>8</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 8-9.

said, 'Write down, for I speak nothing but the truth (mā kharaja minnī illā haqq)'.<sup>1</sup> This express permission cleared all his doubts and he resumed the task of recording the Prophet's sunna in a book (ṣaḥīfa), which he himself named as 'as-sādiqa' (the veracious).<sup>2</sup>

His own testimony about the source of information of this ṣaḥīfa is that he heard its contents directly from the Prophet. He clearly stated that there was no intermediate link of transmitter between him and the Prophet (hādhihī mā sami'tu min Rasūl Allāh, laysa baynī wa baynahū aḥad).<sup>3</sup> He further says that whenever I used to hear anything from the Prophet I wrote it down in this book.<sup>4</sup> In another report he states that all that the Prophet spoke, whether 'yes' or 'no', we wrote it down (naktub mā yaqūl lā aw na'am).<sup>5</sup>

The last two statements of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ along with that of Abū Hurayra that 'Abd Allāh used to write down the ahādīth while he himself did not do so,<sup>6</sup> suggest that the receptacle of these ahādīth i.e. the ṣaḥīfa of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, must have been a large one.<sup>7</sup>

On the basis of another report saying that he had memorised

<sup>1</sup> Tagyīd, 79-81.; Fāsil, 34a-34b.; SD, i, 125.; Bayān, i, 71.; Musnad, ii, 162, 192, 207, 215.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, II, ii, 125.; IV, ii, 8-9.; VII, ii, 189.; Tagyīd, 79.; Fāsil, 34b.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad (Sh), ix, 233.; Tagyīd, 84.; Tab, II, ii, 125.; IV, ii, 9.; VII, ii, 189.; Uṣd, iii, 234.

<sup>4</sup> Tagyīd, 85.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad (Sh), i, 172.n. referring Futūḥ Miṣr (Leiden, 1910), 256-257.

<sup>6</sup> Bayān, i, 70.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal's musnad contains 627 ahādīth transmitted by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, cf: Musnad (Sh), vols. ix, x, xi, ḥadīth nos. 6477-7103.

1000 traditions<sup>1</sup>, read along with the one saying that he recorded everything that he heard from the Prophet<sup>2</sup>, it can be inferred that the ṣaḥīfa under consideration contained 1000 aḥādīth.

This ṣaḥīfa remained preserved in his family for quite a long time. First it was inherited by his grandson Shu'ayb b. Muḥammad, and then, after Shu'ayb's death, it came in possession of 'Amr, the great grandson of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ.<sup>3</sup> This 'Amr (d. 118/120 A.H.) transmitted the traditions from this ṣaḥīfa and incurred thereby the criticism of such critics who disapproved of narrating the ḥadīth without its formal hearing from the teacher.<sup>4</sup> Despite this criticism the traditions from this ṣaḥīfa abound in classical hadith collections. In fact all the traditions having the isnād 'From 'Amr b. Shu'ayb, from his father, from his grandfather' have come from this ṣaḥīfa.<sup>5</sup>

Although the original ṣaḥīfa is now lost, almost all its contents have been incorporated in Ibn Ḥanbal's voluminous Musnad, in a chapter, entitled 'Musnad 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ'.<sup>6</sup> Mujāhid (d. 102 A.H.) is reported to have seen this ṣaḥīfa in possession of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ.<sup>7</sup> It is said to have survived till the time of 'Umar II, when its copies were dispatched to the caliph for Zuhri's use.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Usd, iii, 233, where the word mathal has been used in the sense of ḥadīth.

<sup>2</sup> Taḥyīd, 85.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, viii, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Asmā, I, ii, 29.; Kifāya, 507.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdh, viii, 54.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad (Sh), xi, x, xi, nos. 6477-7103.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, II, ii, 125.; IV, ii, 8-9.; Usd, iii, 234.

<sup>8</sup> Papyri, ii, 37.



It seems that 'Abd Allāh used this ṣaḥīfa for dictating traditions to his students.<sup>1</sup> We are told of two scribes who used to write down his dictation, perhaps, from this ṣaḥīfa.<sup>2</sup>

This ṣaḥīfa was highly treasured by its author, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ. Once when Mujāhid called on him and tried to pick up the ṣaḥīfa from under the mat on which he was sitting (min taht mifrashihi), he forbade him to do so.<sup>3</sup> Although he had never denied anything to Mujāhid, he made an exception in this case and stopped him from taking this ṣaḥīfa. That he considered it a treasure is apparent from another report which says that he used to keep his written material in a box.<sup>4</sup> It is related that one day when he was asked about a ḥadīth, he took out a kitāb<sup>5</sup> from a box (sundūq) and related therefrom the ḥadīth in question.<sup>6</sup>

Another casual reference to the existence of this written record with 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ is found in the report ascribed to Abū Rāshid al-Ḥibrānī. He tells us that once when he came to 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ and asked him to relate what he had heard from the Prophet, he ('Abd Allāh) handed over a book (ṣaḥīfa) to him (Rāshid) saying that it contained the Prophet's ḥadīth. When Rāshid looked into it, he found, among other traditions, a formula of prayer (du'ā) to be recited in the morning and in the evening, which was

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 85, n. 182, citing Ibn 'Asākir's Tārīkh Dimashq, vi, 49.

<sup>2</sup> Khiṭaṭ, ii, 332.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 84.; Fāsil, 34b.; Uṣd, iii, 234.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad (Sh), x, 172-174.; Lisān, xv, 273. (S.V. Zahm).

<sup>5</sup> Referring perhaps to his 'sādiqa.'

<sup>6</sup> Lisān, xv, 273.; (S.V. Zahm).; Musnad (Sh), x, 172-174.

taught by the Prophet to Abū Bakr on the request of the latter.<sup>1</sup>  
 This report proves that 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ had a written record of the Prophet's sunna.

A corroborative evidence of the existence of 'Abd Allāh's ṣaḥīfa is provided by the well known statement of Abū Hurayra in which he refers to the former's practice of recording the Prophet's ḥadīth. He says, 'No one from among the companions possesses larger number of aḥādīth than myself except 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, who used to write them down while I did not do so.'<sup>2</sup>

We have seen that 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ used to dictate aḥādīth to his students<sup>3</sup>. To take an example, Abū Sabra reports that he ('Abd Allāh) dictated to me a ḥadīth from his collection of aḥādīth which he had heard from the Prophet<sup>4</sup>. Another of his students, Shufā b. Māti<sup>5</sup> is reported to have written down two books from his dictations.<sup>6</sup>

His dictations could have come either from the ṣaḥīfa in question or from some other written record of his, for he is reported to have possessed numerous books<sup>7</sup>, and is also said to have collected the fatāwā (legal decisions) of the caliph 'Umar.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 85.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 82.; Bayān, i, 70.; SD (Med), i, 103.;

<sup>3</sup> Mughīth, 216.; Taqyīd, 85, n. 182.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad (Sh), x, 28.

<sup>5</sup> Also known as Shufā b. Mātiḥ. (cf. Mashāhīr, 121, no. 940.)

<sup>6</sup> Khiṭaṭ, ii, 332.

<sup>7</sup> Tdh, i, 36.; Musnad, ii, 176.

<sup>8</sup> Sunan Darq, 453.

(15) 'Kutub' of 'Abīda b. 'Amr as-Salmānī (d. 64/72 A.H.)

'Abīda belonged to the category of those writers who destroyed their manuscripts for fear that their writings might reach incompetent hands and be misused. It is said that this Kufic scholar had written down the ahādīth in books. But when death approached him, he sent for his manuscripts and erased them, saying, "I fear that after my death they would reach incompetent hands and suffer interpolation. (fa yada 'ūhā ghayr mawādi'ihā)".<sup>1</sup> According to another report, he left a will to the effect that his books be either burnt or erased.<sup>2</sup>

It is evident from both reports that he was in possession of written ahādīth, though the manuscripts were destroyed subsequently.

'Abīda, who is listed among the opponents of ḥadīth writing<sup>3</sup>, is said to have forbidden his students to write down his traditions. This prohibition reflects nothing but his fear which he had shown at his death bed, namely the possibility of the desecration of his books. It was owing to this apprehension that he had forbidden his student, Ibrāhīm to retain any book from him for posterity.<sup>4</sup>

'Abīda's collections of ḥadīth may not have survived longer but at any rate he did write down the traditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 63.; Taqyīd, 61.; SD, i, 121.; Bayān, i, 67.; 'Ilm, 9b.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 62.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 45, 46.; Tab, VI, 63.; Bayān, i, 67.; SD, i, 120-121.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, VI, 63.; SD, i, 120.

(16) 'Kutub' of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās (d. 68 A.H.):—

Ibn 'Abbās belongs to the category of those literary figures of early Islam whose interest lay not only in theology but in other disciplines as well. 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114 A.H.) gives the following description of Ibn 'Abbās' literary calibre: "Some people used to come to 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās to study poetry, others to study genealogy, yet others to study pre-Islamic history of the Arabs... He had fixed certain days to teach certain subjects. Thus he allotted one day in a week for teaching the fiqh (law), the next day for the ta'wīl (commentary of the Qur'ān), the third day for the maḡhāzī (battles of the Prophet), another day for the shi'r (poetry) and a day for the ayyām al-'Arab (pre-Islamic history)."<sup>1</sup>

He began his literary career after the death of the Prophet.<sup>2</sup> In due course, he excelled in various branches of knowledge, especially the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth. As regards the former, he came to be known as the father of all tafsīr works.<sup>3</sup> So far as his interest in the ḥadīth is concerned, it appears that he was genuinely interested in its preservation. He used to compare the Qur'ān with the ḥadīth and asked his pupils to pay due attention to the recording of the latter. As for the Qur'ān, he said that it was already preserved and collected (mahfūz majmū'). It was only the ḥadīth, he stressed, which needed determined efforts to preserve it. He suggested the narration of ahādīth among the companions as one of the means to preserve it.<sup>4</sup> He himself was an assiduous collector of ḥadīth and

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, II, ii, 122.; Bagh, i, 175.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, II, i, 121.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, ii, 9, 99.; GAL, i, 190.; GALS, i, 331.; Historical Sources, 131-132.

<sup>4</sup> Tdh, iii, 965.

akhbār not only from the Anṣār but also from the Jews and the Christian Arabs.<sup>1</sup>

In order to hear the traditions from the companions' mouth he used to call at their houses in unfavourable hot and windy weather. Although the companions, on their part, were willing to go to his house and relate the traditions he wanted to hear, saving thereby the cousin of the Prophet from sufferings of scorching heat and dusty winds, he did not agree to it. His usual reply used to be, 'No, I must come to you (if I am real searcher after knowledge)'.<sup>2</sup> He was very careful in accepting the traditions. Hence he was not contented with only one isnād for a tradition. Instead, he searched for as many narrators as he could find for the reports of the Prophet. It is said that he sometimes enquired some 50 companions about one particular ḥadīth.<sup>3</sup>

One may ask at this point: When Ibn 'Abbās was so much interested in the Prophet's traditions, why is the 'ḥadīth' not mentioned in the list of subjects in which he was said to have excelled and for each of which he had devoted special sessions?<sup>4</sup>

In order to explain away this objection, it is necessary to note the relationship between the ḥadīth and the fiḥ in early Islam. In those days, the knowledge of ḥadīth was a prerequisite condition

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<sup>1</sup> Paṭyri, i, 47-48.; ii, 9, 99, 198.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, II, i, 121.; Sunna (Sib), 76-77.; Bayān, i, 85-86.

<sup>3</sup> Nubalā', iii, 231.

<sup>4</sup> The list contained the following branches of knowledge: Fiḥ (law), Ta'wīl (commentary on the Qur'ān.), maḡhāzī (war), Shi'r (Poetry) and Ayyām al-'Arab (pre-Islamic history). cf. Ṭab, II, ii, 121-122.

for the knowledge of fiqh. Thus there could be no faqīh (scholar) at that time without having a sound knowledge of ḥadīth. Ḥadīth, in fact, formed the basis of not only fiqh but also of ta'wīl (commentary on the Qur'ān) and even of maghāzī.<sup>1</sup> With this role of ḥadīth in mind, the objection can be explained thus: Actually there was no necessity, in the above report, of specific mention of ḥadīth while dealing with Ibn 'Abbās' knowledge of fiqh, for it included in its scope the ḥadīth as well.

Although few reports have come down to us regarding Ibn 'Abbās' aversion to the writing down of ahādīth,<sup>2</sup> yet the majority of them show that not only did he approve of recording the traditions but had himself dictated them to his students.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, he is reported to have advised people to fetter knowledge in writing<sup>4</sup> and had himself employed scribes to record the ahādīth for him.<sup>5</sup>

Looking at his literary career one tends to disregard the reports in which he is said to have disapproved of writing the ḥadīth. It appears that these prohibitions were meant to discourage the recording of the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth in the same sheet, thus mixing the text of one with that of the other.

We have already seen that he had fixed certain days for teaching different subjects. We are also told that his teaching circle during

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, i, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 42-43.; Bayān, i, 64-65.; Ilm, 4a.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 102.; Fāsil, 35a-35b.

<sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 92.; Bayān, i, 72.; Ilm, 11b.

<sup>5</sup> Isāba, ii, 332, no. 4781.

the hajj season<sup>1</sup> used to be enlarged<sup>2</sup> and that even non-Arabs were benefitted by his lectures through the intermediary of interpreters.<sup>3</sup> He was so keen to impart religious education that he is said to have put shackles in the feet of his client and pupil, 'Ikrima to teach him the Qur'ān and the sunna.<sup>4</sup>

In the light of these reports it is rightly expected from him that he should leave some written record of the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth. As regards the former, mention may be made of his famous tafsīr which was handed down by his student Mujāhid b. Jabr.<sup>5</sup> Regarding his practice of recording traditions we are told that he used to write down everything that he heard<sup>6</sup> and sometimes employed his slave for this purpose.<sup>7</sup> He is said to have made a collection of 1660 traditions<sup>8</sup> which, on account of his tender age at the time of the Prophet's death, he must have heard from his fellow companions

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<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that many scholars used to hold ḥadīth sessions during the hajj pilgrimage (ayyām al-mawāsim). (cf. Tdh, i, 242). Hushaym b. Bashīr (d. 183 A.H.), for instance, had attended the lectures of Zuhri, Abu Zubayr and 'Amr at Mecca on one of these occasions. (cf. Tdh, i, 229). Also see Bayān, i, 45, for Abū Ḥanīfa's eye witness account of ḥadīth sessions during the hajj.

<sup>2</sup> Istī'āb, ii, 353.

<sup>3</sup> SB, iv, 400 (Aḥkām).

<sup>4</sup> Tab, II, i, 133.

<sup>5</sup> Tabari gives the following account of how the tafsīr of Ibn 'Abbās was compiled. He says, "Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104 A.H.) put questions to Ibn 'Abbās while a scribe wrote down the answers from the latter's dictation, until the entire tafsīr of Ibn 'Abbās was completed." (cf. Papyri, ii, 98.; Tafsīr, i, 90.; Two Mucaddimas, 193.)

Despite this report, it is said that Ibn 'Abbās left no finally fixed texts and that the tafsīr works which now go under his name include materials added from time to time by pupils, editors and transmitters, almost all of whom committed their materials to writing. (cf. Papyri, ii, 99, referring GAL, i, 190.; GALS, i, 331.)

<sup>6</sup> Tab, II, ii, 123.; Taqyīd, 92.

<sup>7</sup> Tarātīb, ii, 247.

<sup>8</sup> Tadrib, 205.



and not directly from the Prophet. According to one report, he used to carry wooden tablets (alwāḥ) with him to write down the traditions.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from his tafsīr, the following written collections of Ibn 'Abbās have been mentioned in the sources:

(i) Camel-load of kutub or dafātir: It is said that Ibn 'Abbās possessed such a large collection of books that it needed a beast of burden to transfer them from one place to another.<sup>2</sup>

Despite giving some allowance for exaggeration in this report we can admit that he possessed a large number of books. Most unfortunately we are not told of the subject matter of these 'camel-loads of dafātir'. But in view of his special interest in the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth, we can certainly expect some tafsīr work and ḥadīth collection among these books. This, in fact, is borne out by the fact that the scholars like 'Ikrima and Ibn 'Uqba have made copious extracts from these books.<sup>3</sup>

These books are reported to have reached Ibn 'Abbās' slave student Kurayb, who later entrusted them to Mūsā b. 'Uqba.<sup>4</sup> It is mentioned that whenever 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās wanted any of his father's books, he used to write to Kurayb: 'send me such and such a book (ṣaḥīfa)', whereupon Kurayb copied the required volume and sent it to 'Alī.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, II, ii, 123.; Taqyīd, 91-92.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, V, 216.; Taqyīd, 136.; "Earliest Biographies...", IC, ii, 167.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 136.; Tab, V, 216.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, V, 216.; Taqyīd, 19, 136.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, V, 216.; Taqyīd, 136.; Shadh, i, 114.

We find an incidental reference of these books in the following report of 'Ikrima, the pupil of Ibn 'Abbās. Speaking about a certain letter he is reported to have said, "I found it among the books (kutub) of Ibn 'Abbās after his death and I copied it."<sup>1</sup>

(ii) Copy of the judgements of 'Alī: He was also in possession of a copy of 'Alī's legal sentences (qadā'), which was seen with him by Ṭā'ūs.<sup>2</sup> He had copied it for one of his students.<sup>3</sup>

(iii) His books in possession of few men of Ṭā'if: During his old age when his eyes failed him few men from Ṭā'if are reported to have brought some of his books (kutub min kutubihī) and read to him for collation.<sup>4</sup>

(iv) His collection of traditions from Rāfi' b. Khadīj: Salmā, the maid servant of the Prophet and the wife of Abū Rāfi' b. Khadīj, gives an eye witness account of Ibn 'Abbās' practice of writing of ḥadīth from her husband. She states, "I saw 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās coming to (my husband) Abū Rāfi', carrying wooden tablets (alwāḥ) and writing down matters concerning the practices of the Prophet."<sup>5</sup>

(v) His book with Ḥakam b. Miqsam: It seems that a written record of Ibn 'Abbās' ḥadīth reached al-Ḥakam b. Miqsam, of whom it is reported that his entire collection of Ibn 'Abbās' transmission, with the exception of four aḥādīth which he had personally heard from him, came from the kitāb (book).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Von Kremer's edition...", JASB, xxv, (1856), p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> SM, i, 7.

<sup>3</sup> SL, i, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Kifāya, 384.; Nubalā', iii, 238.; Jāmi', xiii, 326 (ʿIlal).

<sup>5</sup> Ṭab, II, ii, 125.

<sup>6</sup> 'Origin of writing...', JASB, xxv. (1856), p. 328.

(17) 'Kitāb' of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 73/74 A.H.):—

Ibn 'Umar was a very careful transmitter of ḥadīth.<sup>1</sup> Although it is said that he was against writing ḥadīth,<sup>2</sup> his practice of dictating traditions to his pupils disproves this assertion. At least his freed slave Nāfi' was seen writing down his dictation.<sup>3</sup> Apart from Nāfi',<sup>4</sup> there were a few others, for instance, Sa'īd b. Jubayr<sup>5</sup>, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān<sup>6</sup>, and 'Umar b. 'Ubayd Allāh<sup>7</sup> who had received aḥādīth from him in written form.

It looks that Ibn 'Umar, for sometimes, following his father's advice, refrained from writing the ḥadīth. But he gave up this prejudice in his later life.<sup>8</sup> Dhahabī provides us with the information that Ibn 'Umar was in possession of a few books.<sup>9</sup> One book possessed by him was the kitāb of 'Umar which is said to have been read to him several times<sup>10</sup> by his slave Nāfi', who, it should be remembered, remained in his company for thirty years.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps it was the same kitāb regarding the zakāt which 'Umar had prepared for the guidance of his governors and which is known in the sources as kitāb as-ṣadaqa.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He disallowed the transmission of ḥadīth according to its sense and insisted on the verbatim transmission (riwāya bi'l-lafz). cf. Tab, IV, i, 106.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 44.

<sup>3</sup> SD, i, 127-128.; Ṣaḥīfa, 34.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 71.

<sup>4</sup> Bagh, x, 406.; Musnad, ii, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 43-44, 102-103.; Bayān, i, 66.; Ḥilya, iv, 276.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, IV, i, 110-111, where the scribal error 'Hārūn' instead of 'Marwān' should be corrected.

<sup>7</sup> Musnad, ii, 45.

<sup>8</sup> Taqyīd, 43-44.; Bayān, i, 66.

<sup>9</sup> Mubalā', iii, 160.

<sup>10</sup> Amwāl, 393.

<sup>11</sup> Tdh, i, 88.

<sup>12</sup> Amwāl, 362, 363, 366, 379, et passim.; SAD, ii, 133 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1570

(18) 'Sahīfa' of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya (d. 73 A.H.):—

Caliph 'Alī's son, known as Ibn al-Ḥanafīya, was a ḥadīth student who used to learn and write the traditions from Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh.<sup>1</sup> He is credited with a ṣaḥīfa (also described as kitāb) which was transmitted by his pupil 'Abd al-A'ālā b. 'Āmir.<sup>2</sup>

(19) 'Sahīfa' of Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh (d. 78 A.H.):—

Jābir has been listed among the companions who undertook long, arduous journeys in quest of ḥadīth. It is reported that he once travelled from Medina to Syria - a month's journey - to hear one single ḥadīth from 'Abd Allāh b. Unays, a companion.<sup>3</sup> Another such journey was undertaken by him when he went to Egypt to receive a ḥadīth from 'Uqba b. 'Āmir.<sup>4</sup>

He was in favour of writing ḥadīth and had not only written down his own collection but used to dictate the traditions to his students<sup>5</sup> during his ḥadīth sessions which he held regularly in the mosque at Medina.<sup>6</sup> His own written collection, containing more than 1000 aḥādīth,<sup>7</sup> is described in the sources as ṣaḥīfa.<sup>8</sup> It has been cited so by 'Abd ar-Razzāq in his Muṣannaf under the chapter 'aḥ-Dhunūb'.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 104.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, V, 77.; VI, 233.; Tahdh, vi, 94.; Jarḥ(Intr.), 71.; Jarḥ, III, i, 26.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 93.; SB, i, 31 ('Ilm).

<sup>4</sup> Ma'rifat, 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 104.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, ii, 67.

<sup>7</sup> Asmā', I, i, 142.

<sup>8</sup> Kifāya, 506-507.; Mst, ii, 10/23.; Tab, V, 344.; Tahdh, iv, 215.; Fāsil, 46b.

<sup>9</sup> Ṣaḥīfa, 27, n.

Ḥasan Baṣrī and Qatāda are reported to have related the aḥādīth from this ṣaḥīfa.<sup>1</sup> Though the exact size of this ṣaḥīfa is not specified in the sources, yet considering the fact that it contained over one thousand aḥādīth<sup>2</sup>, one may call it a 'large collection of aḥādīth'.

We find occasional reference of this ṣaḥīfa in the biographies of the traditionists as well. For instance, in the biographical note about Qatāda, it is said, "Qatāda possessed the best memory among the people of Baṣra; he had memorised the ṣaḥīfa of Jābir after hearing only once."<sup>3</sup> While boasting of his powerful memory he himself refers to this ṣaḥīfa, and says, "I learn the ṣaḥīfa of Jābir by heart better than the second chapter of the Holy Qur'ān."<sup>4</sup>

Other references to this ṣaḥīfa are found in the biographical notices of Abū Sufyān Wāsiṭī, Ismā'īl b. 'Abd al-Karīm aṣ-Ṣan'ānī (d. 210 A.H.) and Sulaymān b. Qays al-Yashkurī. It is said of Ṭalḥa b. Nāfi' Abū Sufyān Wāsiṭī that all the traditions that he relates from Jābir are in fact from the latter's ṣaḥīfa.<sup>5</sup> In the biographical note of Ismā'īl it is mentioned that Ismā'īl relates this ṣaḥīfa (of Jābir) from Wahb b. Munibbih, who, on his turn, relates it from Jābir.<sup>6</sup> Of Sulaymān, it is said that he attended Jābir's lectures and wrote from him the ṣaḥīfa.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jāmi', vi, 52 (Buyū').

<sup>2</sup> Asmā', I, i, 142.

<sup>3</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 58.; Tdh, i, 116.

<sup>4</sup> Ṣaḥīfa, 27, citing Bukhārī's At-Tārīkh al-Kabīr, IV, ii, 186, no. 328.

<sup>5</sup> Jarḥ, II, i, 475.; Tahdh, v, 27.; Kifāya, 507.; Mizān, ii, 342, no. 4012.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, i, 315-316.

<sup>7</sup> Tahdh, iv, 215.; Jarḥ, II, i, 136.

Writing about Abū 'z-Zubayr, Abū Sufyān, Sha'bī and Qatāda jointly, Ibn Hajar quotes Abū Ḥatim as saying that all of them had heard the contents of this ṣaḥīfa (of Jābir) and transmitted them on his authority.<sup>1</sup> This report not only indicates the existence of a ṣaḥīfa with Jābir but also points that he used to dictate ahādīth from this manuscript.

Apart from this ṣaḥīfa, Jābir is also credited with a booklet on hajj (pilgrimage).<sup>2</sup>

(20) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of Sulaymān b. Qays al-Yashkurī (d.c.75 A.H.):—

Sulaymān was in favour of writing down the ahādīth<sup>3</sup> and had written down a ṣaḥīfa from Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh.<sup>4</sup> One of his ḥadīth collections - a kitāb - was in possession of his mother, who brought it to Thābit, Qatāda, Abū Bishr, al-Ḥasan and Muṭarrāf. While Thābit transmitted only one tradition from this book, the others transmitted the whole of it.<sup>5</sup>

(21) 'Kitāb' of Bashīr b. Nahīk (d. c.80 A.H.):—

Bashīr was the well known pupil of Abū Hurayra who made a collection of ḥadīth from the latter's transmission. He is said to have presented this collection - a kitāb - to his teacher, seeking his permission to transmit it on his authority. He himself gives an account of this written collection of ahādīth. He says, "I used

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, iv, 215.; Mst, ii, 10/23.

<sup>2</sup> Tdh, i, 41.; Tahdh, iv, 215.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 68.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 108.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, iv, 215.; Jarḥ, II, i, 136.; Jāmi', vi, 52 (Buyū').

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 506.

to write down what I heard from Abū Hurayra. When I wanted to part company, I went to him with my book (kitābī) and read out to him. Then I asked whether this was what I had heard from him, whereupon he answered in affirmative."<sup>1</sup>

The report clearly points to a kitāb, containing the Prophet's traditions, in Bashīr's possession.

(22) 'Majāll' of Anas b. Mālik (d. 91 A.H.):—

Abū Ḥamza Anas b. Mālik (d. 91/93/95 A.H.) is acknowledged as one of the best authorities on the Prophet's traditions. It is reported of him that once, after he had narrated a ḥadīth, someone asked if he had heard that tradition from the Prophet. This question made him angry and he retorted, "By God, all that is related to you by us, we have heard from the Prophet."<sup>2</sup> When he died, Muwarraq (d. 105 A.H.) lamented the loss in these words: "Half of the knowledge has perished today". When asked to explain this statement, Muwarraq said, "Whenever someone from amongst the non-conformists (ahl al-ahwā') differed from us in the matters of ḥadīth, we used to say, 'Come let us go to hear (the correct version of the ḥadīth) from one (Anas) who had heard it from the Prophet.' (Now after his death it is not possible)."<sup>3</sup>

Anas was one of the earliest defenders of recorded ḥadīth. Taking the word 'ilm' in the sense of ḥadīth, he said, "The knowledge (ilm) of those who have not committed it to writing is not to be

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, i, 470.; Taqyīd, 101.; SD, i, 127.; Bayān, i, 72.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 65.; Ilm, 11a, 11b.; Tab, VII, i, 162.; Jāmi', xiii, 327 (Ilal).; Fāsil, 63b.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VII, i, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, i, 378.



considered as knowledge."<sup>1</sup> He advised his own sons thus, "O my sons, chain down the knowledge ('ilm) in writing."<sup>2</sup>

Anas, at the age of ten, was presented by his mother, Umm Sulaym, to the Prophet, who accepted him as his page.<sup>3</sup> He served the Prophet in this capacity till the latter's death. By staying with the Prophet for a period of ten years,<sup>4</sup> he found good opportunity to collect the former's traditions.<sup>5</sup>

It seems that he had made good use of the time he spent with the Prophet and wrote down his traditions whenever he got a chance to do so. An incidental reference to such a practice is found in the following report: It is reported that once the Prophet related a tradition in the house of 'Itbān b. Mālik (died in the reign of Mu'āwiya). This ḥadīth appealed so much to Anas that he asked his son to write it down, who carried out his order.<sup>6</sup>

During his later life when some people visited him and asked him to relate traditions, he is reported to have taken out volumes

<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 96.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 14.; Tabyīn, ii, 22.; Bayān, i, 73.; SD, 126-127.; Taqyīd, 96-97.

<sup>3</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 12.; Jarḥ (Intr.), 144.; Jarḥ, I, i, 284.; Isāba, i, 71, no. 277.; Mashāḥir, 37, no. 215.

<sup>4</sup> Jāmi', xiii, 224 (Manāqib).

<sup>5</sup> 'Origin of writing...', JASB, XXV, (1856), p. 319.; Taqyīd, 95-96.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 94.

of books (majāll<sup>1</sup>, kutub, ṣikāk<sup>2</sup>) and said, "These are the books wherein I have recorded whatever I had heard from the Prophet and all of them I have given him for his perusal."<sup>3</sup> It is evident from this report that not only had Anas recorded the traditions from the Prophet but had also collated them.

As Anas was a scribe at the tender age of ten,<sup>4</sup> his writing of the Prophet's traditions right from his prime youth is understandable. He himself was seen transcribing<sup>5</sup> and is reported to have exhorted his sons, Mūsā, Naḍr and 'Abd Allāh to write down the 'ilm i.e. ḥadīth.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes he himself wrote down the aḥādīth for the use of his sons and pupils.<sup>7</sup>

As he lived till the end of the first century after the hijra, he found enough opportunity to disseminate the knowledge of ḥadīth among the successors. Thus we find a long list of his students who had transmitted and made collections from him. Among them may be mentioned 'Abd Allāh b. Dīnār<sup>8</sup>, Ibrāhīm b. Hudba<sup>9</sup>, Kathīr b. Salīm<sup>10</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Majāll, the plural of majalla is translated as (i) a document containing ḥikma, and (ii) any book. (cf. Lexicon, I, ii, 438.; Taqyīd, 95, n.)

<sup>2</sup> Ṣikāk, the plural of Ṣakk is a piece of writing, a register or a book. (cf. Lexicon, I, iv, 1709.)

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 95-96.; Bagh, viii, 259.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 67-68.; Also see Fāsil, 34b.

<sup>4</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 274.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 96-97.; Bayān, i, 73.; SD, i, 126-127.; Ilm, 10a (without addressing them by name).; Fāsil, 34b (without addressing them by name).

<sup>7</sup> Papyri, i, 48.; ii, 118.

<sup>8</sup> It is reported that he had written a large book from his teacher. (cf. Ma'rifat, 10.)

<sup>9</sup> He is said to have written down a book (nuskha) from Anas. (cf. Ma'rifat, 9.)

<sup>10</sup> Tahdh, ii, 57.

Abān b. 'Ayyāsh (d. 138 A.H.)<sup>1</sup> and Thābit al-Bunānī (d. 123/128 A.H.).<sup>2</sup>

It was due to his reputation as a writer that in later times few forged copies of aḥādīth were made and attributed to him.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to Anas' own collections of majālī and ṣikāk, he possessed a booklet (kitāb) on taxation which was given to him by the caliph Abū Bakr at the time of the former's governorship of Baḥrayn.<sup>4</sup> This booklet, containing the rates of zakāt on animals, bore the seal of the Prophet<sup>5</sup>.

The authenticity of this document has been doubted by Goldziher on the basis of the interpretation of the word 'za'ama' occurring in the isnād of one of the several versions of this report. It would be rewarding to discuss the validity of this criticism.

The information about this document has been provided by the narrators, Hammād b. Abī Sulaymān<sup>6</sup> and 'Abd Allāh b. Muthannā<sup>7</sup>, both of whom relate on the authority of Thumāma (d. 110 A.H.), the

- <sup>1</sup> He was seen as writing from Anas on tablets. (cf. Taqyīd, 109.; SD, i, 127.)
- <sup>2</sup> He was associated with Anas for 40 years and had a collection of 250 traditions. (cf. Ḥilya, ii, 327.; Jarḥ, I, i, 449.)
- <sup>3</sup> Among these forged nuskhas may be mentioned the following: (i) collection of Abān b. 'Ayyāsh containing 1500 unfounded traditions (cf. Mizān, i, 12, no. 15). This collection should be distinguished from the genuine one referred to above. (ii) collection of al-'Alā' b. Zayd (cf. Tahdh, viii, 183.), (iii) collection of Khālīd b. 'Ubayd al-Baṣrī (cf. Tahdh, iii, 105.).
- <sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 87.; SB, i, 366-368 (Zakāt), iv, 339 (Ḥiyāl).; SAD, ii, 129-130, ḥadīth no. 1567 (Zakāt).; SN, v, 18-23 (Zakāt).; SIM, i, 551-552 (Zakāt).
- <sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 87.; SAD, ii, 129, ḥadīth no. 1567 (Zakāt).
- <sup>6</sup> SAD, ii, 129, ḥadīth no. 1567 (Zakāt).; SN, v, 18 (Zakāt).; Taqyīd, 87.
- <sup>7</sup> SB, i, 366-368 (Zakāt); iv, 339 (Ḥiyāl).; SIM, i, 551-552 (Zakāt).; Taqyīd, 87.

grandson of Anas b. Mālik. Since one of Ḥammad's version has led to some misunderstanding, it is necessary to throw some light on it. This version, found only in Abū Dā'ūd's sunan, runs as follows:

"I got from Thumāma b. 'Abd Allāh b. Anas a booklet (kitāb), which, he said (ẓa'ama), was sent in written form to Anas by Abū Bakr..."<sup>1</sup>

The word ẓa'ama in this report led Goldziher to conclude that "Ḥammad himself doubted the genuineness of this document."<sup>2</sup> Goldziher tried to prove his contention by citing examples from early literary sources in which the word ẓa'ama had been used in the sense of doubt and mistrust, though he also admitted that the word was used by lexicographers and theologians in the general sense of qāla, meaning 'to communicate something bonafide as true.'<sup>3</sup> But after giving both interpretations, supported by examples, he preferred the first meaning arbitrarily to cast doubt about the genuineness of the document. His preference for the first of the two probable interpretations was, therefore, somewhat subjective. Although he shows his scholastic objectivity by giving both interpretations, yet he fails to point to the reader why he chose the first meaning. In fact, the second, and not the first interpretation, seems preferable to an unbiased mind.

In the first place, we notice that the versions, found in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī and in the sunans of Ibn Māja and Nasa'ī, do not give the least indication that the authenticity of this document

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<sup>1</sup> SAD, ii, 129, ḥadīth no. 1567 (Zakāt).; Tagyīd, 87.

<sup>2</sup> Mst, ii, 51-52/58.

<sup>3</sup> Mst, ii, 52/59.

was doubtful in the eyes of any of the transmitters. We find that Nasa'ī quotes Ḥammād as making a positive statement with respect to this document. He is reported as saying, "I received this document (kitāb) from Thumāma... who got it from Anas who received it from Abū Bakr:"<sup>1</sup> There is no mention of za'ama in this report. Neither do we find its occurrence in the versions given by Bukhārī and Ibn Māja. Thus the solitary version with the misleading term 'za'ama' found in Abū Dā'ūd's sunan, as against other versions without this ambiguous term, cannot be made a basis to prove the unauthenticity of the document. Furthermore, there seems no obvious reason for Ḥammād's doubting the document especially when he gives a detailed account of its contents and occasion of its writing.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the fact that he himself was interested and did personally receive the document from Thumāma, itself shows that he considered it as genuine. Otherwise he would not have asked for it.

It appears therefore, that it was not "Ḥammad 'himself'"<sup>3</sup> but Goldziher himself who doubted the genuineness of the above document.

In the light of the above observations we can say that the word za'ama occurring in Abū Dā'ūd's report should be taken to mean qāla i.e. he said. This interpretation would absolve Ḥammād from the unfounded charge of suspecting the document.

In fact, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the

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<sup>1</sup> SN, v, 18 (Zakāt).

<sup>2</sup> SB, i, 366-368 (Zakāt); iv, 339 (Ḥiyal).; SN, v, 18-23 (Zakāt).; SAD, ii, 129-130, ḥadith no. 1567 (Zakāt).; SIM, i, 551-552 (Zakāt)

<sup>3</sup> Mst, ii, 51/58.

document in question, for it appears that it was a copy of the Prophet's booklet 'kitāb as-sadaqa' referred to above.<sup>1</sup> Abū Bakr, who had received this kitāb after the Prophet's death and had himself acted according to its provisions<sup>2</sup>, might have copied this document and given to Anas b. Mālīk at the time of the latter's appointment as governor of Baḥrayn.<sup>3</sup>

It seems that this document remained preserved in the family of Anas and later came in possession of his grandson Thumāma b. 'Abd Allāh,<sup>4</sup> from whom it was received by Hammād.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the document mentioned above, Anas had received few ahādīth in written form from Zayd b. Arqam (d. 66 A.H.)<sup>6</sup>. As Anas outlived most of the companions, and was the last of the companions who died at Basra,<sup>7</sup> he found longer period of time to transmit the traditions. Consequently, he narrated a large number of traditions, most of which have been conserved by Ṭayālīsī<sup>8</sup> and Ibn Ḥanbal<sup>9</sup> in their respective Musnads.

<sup>1</sup> See supra, pp. 311-312.

<sup>2</sup> SAD, ii, 131 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1568.; SD (Med.), i, 321.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, i, 378.

<sup>4</sup> Kifāya, 473.; Tacyīd, 87.

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 473.; Tacyīd, 87.; SN, v, 18 (Zakāt).; SAD, ii, 129 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1567.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, iii, 394.

<sup>7</sup> Tahdh, i, 378.

<sup>8</sup> Musnad, (Ṭ), 264-286.

<sup>9</sup> Musnad, iii, 98-292.

(23) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of Sa'īd b. Jubayr (d. 95 A.H.):—

Sa'īd was a scholar both of the tafsīr and the ḥadīth. He is said to have compiled a commentary on the Qur'ān<sup>1</sup> by the order of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik after whose death it came in his court library where it remained preserved.<sup>2</sup> 'Aṭā' b. Dīnār (d. 126 A.H.), one of the transmitters of this tafsīr, is reported to have seen and read the manuscript in this library.<sup>3</sup> Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim was another famous transmitter of Ibn Jubayr's tafsīr<sup>4</sup>, known in the sources as 'ṣaḥīfa'.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from his work on tafsīr, Ibn Jubayr is credited with collections of aḥādīth transmitted by Ibn 'Abbās<sup>6</sup> and Ibn 'Umar<sup>7</sup>. He was such an enthusiastic collector of the traditions that not only did he write the aḥādīth in proper note books (ṣaḥīfa)<sup>8</sup> and on tablets (alwāḥ)<sup>9</sup>, but in cases of emergency when no writing material was at hand, he wrote them down on camel's saddle (raḥl), on his palm and even on the soles of his shoes. He himself reports that sometimes when the dictation of Ibn 'Abbās was lengthy while his supply of writing material (ṣaḥīfa and alwāḥ) proved insufficient, he recorded the traditions on his boots and on his palm.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, he says that I used to write down the aḥādīth narrated by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar on the camel's saddle.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 179, 186.; Taqyīd, 102-103.

<sup>2</sup> Tabyīn, i, 362.; Mīzān, iii, 70, no. 5638.

<sup>3</sup> Jarḥ, III, i, 332.; Mīzān, iii, 70, no. 5638.; Papyri, ii, 99.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, VI, 210.

<sup>5</sup> Jarḥ, III, i, 332.; Mīzān, iii, 70, no. 5638.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 43, 102.; SD, i, 128.; Tab, VI, 179.; Fāsil, 35b, 36a.

<sup>7</sup> Bayān, i, 66.; Taqyīd, 44, 103.; Tab, VI, 180.

<sup>8</sup> Taqyīd, 44, 102.; Tab, VI, 179.; Bayān, i, 66, 73.; SD, i, 128.

<sup>9</sup> Taqyīd, 102..

<sup>10</sup> Taqyīd, 102.; Tab, VI, 179.; SD, i, 128.

<sup>11</sup> Taqyīd, 103.



The traditions thus recorded on different odd materials were later preserved in permanent books. This is clear from Ibn Jubayr's own statement. He says, "(Sometimes while in a journey) when I heard (traditions) from Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās at night, I wrote it on my saddle and then, in the morning, I copied it (hattā asbaha wa ansakhahu)<sup>1</sup> [in the proper note book].<sup>2</sup>

Thus it is clear from the above reports that although the traditions heard by Ibn Jubayr were sometimes written on odd materials and in scattered sheets, they were later accumulated and preserved in permanent note-books. This in turn, falsifies the statement that Ibn Jubayr was averse to writing down the ḥadīth.<sup>3</sup> This has been disproved by Ibn Jubayr's own statements who said, 'I used to write down on my alwāḥ, on the soles of my shoes, on my palm and in the ṣahīfa.'<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to note that Ibn Jubayr's above statements help a great deal in ascertaining the meaning of certain terms used for recording the ḥadīth. It looks that while kitāb and ṣahīfa in his time were used in the sense of proper note-books meant for permanent recording, the other terms like alwāḥ (tablets), raḥl (camel's saddle) and naʿl (sole of the shoe) referred to the materials used for rough note taking which served as aids to permanent recording.

<sup>1</sup> Variant 'hattā anzila fa aktubahu' i.e. I got down from the (camel's back) and transferred it into proper note book. (cf. Taḥyīd, 103.)

<sup>2</sup> Taḥyīd, 102.; SD, i, 127.; Fāsil, 77b.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VI, 179.

<sup>4</sup> Taḥyīd, 102-103.; Tab, VI, 179.; SD, i, 128.

Viewed in this light, we can say that the ḥadīth collection of Ibn Jubayr referred to as 'sahīfa', was fairly large and was preserved for posterity.

(24) 'Nuskha' of Shahr b. Ḥawshab al-Ash'arī (d. 100 A.H.):—

Shahr b. Ḥawshab was popularly known as faqīh (jurist) and qārī (reciter of the Qur'ān in pleasing tone). He transmitted the traditions from Abū Hurayra, 'Ā'isha, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Ibn 'Umar and many other companions.<sup>1</sup>

He is credited with several ḥadīth collections some of which were in possession of Hishām b. Ḥassān.<sup>2</sup> He used to dictate traditions to his students. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bahrām, who had transmitted a 'nuskha'<sup>3</sup> from Shahr<sup>4</sup>, says that the latter had dictated these ahādīth to me.<sup>5</sup>

(25) 'Nuskha' of Hibbān b. Jaz'as-Sulamī (d.c 100 A.H.):—

Hibbān was considered a trustworthy transmitter who had transmitted traditions from Ibn 'Umar and Abū Hurayra. From him narrated Abū Umayya 'Abd al-Karīm b. Abī'l-makhārīq, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Uthmān and Muṭarrif b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān etc.<sup>6</sup>

The last mentioned scholar is reported to have made a written collection of Hibbān's transmitted material. The collection is known as 'nuskha'.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, iv, 369.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, xi, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Variant 'kitāb'. (cf. Bagh, xi, 59.)

<sup>4</sup> Jarḥ, III, i, 9.; Bagh, xi, 59.

<sup>5</sup> Bagh, xi, 59.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, ii, 171.

<sup>7</sup> Jarḥ, I, ii, 268.

(26) 'Nuskha' of Khālīd b. Ma'dān al-Kalā'i (d. 103/104 A.H.):—

Khālīd was one of the leading traditionists of Syria. He had received a large number of traditions from the companions and had collected them in a codex form. This collection has been described as a 'book (muṣḥaf) bound between two boards, drawn together with clasps (kāna 'ilmuhu fī muṣḥaf lahū azrār wa'urā).'<sup>1</sup>

This collection, also known as nuskha, was inherited by his pupil Bahīr b. Sa'd (d. 160 A.H.),<sup>2</sup> who passed it on to Baqīyya b. al-Walīd (d. 196).<sup>3</sup> The latter gives the following account of Khālīd's collection. He says, "Bahīr handed over to me the muṣḥaf of Khālīd b. Ma'dān which contained his 'ilm (i.e. ḥadīth). It was in the codex form like that of the Qur'ān and had loops ('urā) and buttons (azrār)."<sup>4</sup>

On the basis of the distinction we have drawn between ṣaḥīfa and kitāb on the one hand and muṣḥaf on the other - the latter being a collection of sheets bound together<sup>5</sup> - we may assume that Khālīd's compendium was a large one. Moreover, its description as 'having buttons, boards and loops' further strengthens this assertion. It suggests that the muṣḥaf in question contained so many sheets that boards were required to hold them together. Furthermore, since Khālīd had met about seventy companions,<sup>6</sup> it is very likely that he had heard and written from them a large number of ahādīth, to form a sizeable nuskha.

<sup>1</sup> Tdh, i, 87, 166.; Tahdh, iii, 119.; Maṣāḥif, 134-135.; Papyri, i, 22.; ii, 225.

<sup>2</sup> Tdh, i, 166.; Jarḥ, I, i, 412.; Papyri, ii, 225, 230.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VII, ii, 162.; Maṣāḥif, 134-135.; Hilya, v, 218.; Jarḥ, I, ii, 351.

<sup>4</sup> Maṣāḥif, 134-135.

<sup>5</sup> See supra, chapter IV, pp. 227.

<sup>6</sup> Ikmāl, 593.

(27) 'Kutub' of Abū Qilāba (d. 104/105 A.H.):—

'Abd Allāh b. Zayd al-Jarmi, Abū Qilāba was a staunch supporter of ḥadīth writing. He used to say, "I prefer writing to forgetfulness."<sup>1</sup> He was reputed for his knowledge of fiqh and ḥadīth. But despite his juristic knowledge, this pious scholar was unwilling to accept a post of qadā' (judgeship). Lest he was forced to accept this office he left his home at Basra and sought refuge in the wilderness of Syria.<sup>2</sup>

He is reported to have possessed a large collection of ḥadīth manuscripts. These books were available to his students and were transmitted to them.<sup>3</sup> Jarīr b. Ḥāzim, one of his pupils, is reported to have read his collections.<sup>4</sup>

During the last years of his life Abū Qilāba made plans for the disposal of his books. It is reported that he willed them to his student Ayyūb as-Sikhtiyānī (d. 131 A.H.).<sup>5</sup> It is reported that after his death, these books were delivered safely to his trustee<sup>6</sup>. The sources say that the large collection of Abū Qilāba's books amounted to about half a camel load.<sup>7</sup>

These books were later used by Ayyūb, who often confused the

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<sup>1</sup> Bayān, i, 72.; Taqyīd, 103.; Also see Fāsil, 35a.

<sup>2</sup> Mashāhīr, 89, no. 649.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VII, i, 91, 133-135.; SD, ii, 409.; Jarh, II, ii, 57-58.; Tdh, i, 94-95.; Ḥilya, ii, 282-289.; v, 355-356.; Kifāya, 376.

<sup>4</sup> Kifāya, 376.

<sup>5</sup> Tdh, i, 82.; Fāsil, 51a.; Ma'ārif, 155.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, VII, i, 91, 135.; VII, ii, 17.; Kifāya, 503.; Ma'ārif, 155.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, VII, i, 91, 135.; VII, ii, 17.; Kifāya, 503.

traditions which he had heard from Abū Qilāba orally with those he found in the inherited books.<sup>1</sup> It is reported that these books were used by Ḥammād b. Zayd, the pupil of Ayyūb, as well.<sup>2</sup>

Since Abū Qilāba had written down the traditions for future generations,<sup>3</sup> he was too cautious for their safe transmission to posterity. He was very apprehensive lest this religious literature be misused after his death. As a safeguard against such fate of his books he left a will to the effect that after his death, his manuscripts should be entrusted to Ayyūb, his trusted student, but in case the latter could not survive till that day the books should be burnt (variant: destroyed) instead.<sup>4</sup>

The above report clearly shows Abū Qilāba's intention to preserve the ahādīth for posterity. Had he been against preserving the traditions, in writing, he would not have left such a will.

(28) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 A.H.):—

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was a renowned scholar of his time<sup>5</sup> whom caliph 'Abd al-Malik consulted on a dogmatic problem of human freedom of choice versus the theistic determination. His treatise on this problem along with the caliph's letter is well known and has come

<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 329, 504.; Papyri, ii, 230.; Ma'ārif 155.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 91.; SD, i, 45, 136, 253.; ii, 223, 236, 311, 434.; Bayān, i, 34, 251.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, ii, 52, 230.

<sup>4</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 135.; Tdh, i, 88.; Taqyīd, 62.

<sup>5</sup> He came from an educated family. Both his father and mother were school teachers. cf. Papyri, ii, 17.

down to us.<sup>1</sup> But apart from this famous risāla, Ḥasan possessed many books<sup>2</sup>, one of which has been described in the sources as 'sahīfa'.<sup>3</sup> It appears that this was a large book containing many

<sup>1</sup> For Arabic text and German translation, see, Ritter, Hallmut, "Studien Zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit", Der Islam, xxi, (1933), pp. 1-83. For the authenticity of the document see Julian Obermann, "Political theory in early Islam", JAOS, LV (1935), 138-162, especially pp. 154-155, where Obermann says, "The historical reality lingers from the first to the last line of our risāla". Also see Formative Period, 101, where Prof. Watt says, "Modern scholarship sees no good grounds for denying al-Ḥasan's authorship."

It is significant to note here that the treatise, though full of the Qur'ānic verses, does not contain the ahādīth regarding freedom of will or determination. This point has been greatly emphasised by late Professor Schacht (cf. OMJ, 141.) who adduces it as evidence for his theory that the traditions on this specific subject in particular and those on other subjects in general, had been invented after Ḥasan. But this hypothesis is untenable and liable to be rejected. Ḥasan's failure to cite traditions on one specific problem does not necessarily mean that no ḥadīth of any kind existed. In fact, the caliph's demand from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī to send him narrations (riwāya) from any one of the companions, itself suggests that the caliph had taken for granted the existence of traditional material. What can at the most be said is this: that since the debate on this dogmatic issue was relatively new, as has been admitted by Ḥasan himself, (cf. Der Islam, xxi, p. 68), the traditions on that particular subject were not well known and hence not known to Ḥasan as well. Furthermore, Ḥasan being an Iraqi scholar, knew that the people in Syria, owing to school-rivalry, would not accept the traditions coming from the rival school of Basra. Perhaps with this in view in mind Ḥasan confined himself to the verses of the Qur'ān and omitted the traditions in his risāla.

It is also possible that Ḥasan had refrained from quoting the ahādīth to convince the Mu'tazilites and Qadarites - the sects who based their arguments mainly on the Qur'ān. Knowing well that his views on the dogmatic problem of predestination were asked by 'Abd al-Malik to combat the viewpoints of the above two sects, Ḥasan confined himself to the verses of the Qur'ān with complete disregard to the traditions on the subject. Had he supported his viewpoint by the ahādīth, they would not have convinced the Mu'tazilites and the Qadarites of Syria.

Lastly, the ahādīth on this dogmatic issue were so few that they might not have come to Ḥasan's knowledge till then. It is a fact that the number of these ahādīth in the present ḥadīth collections can be counted on finger-tips.

In the light of these arguments we can say that the absence of the ahādīth in the risāla of Ḥasan does not prove the non-existence of written traditions in his time. What can at the most be said is this, that either Ḥasan did not possess the traditions relating to the particular topic of Qadar, or he purposely confined himself with the quotations from the Qur'ān.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VII, i, 116, 127.; Taqyīd, 101.; Bayān, i, 74-75.; Fāsil, 35a.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 506.; Tab, VII, i, 116.



traditions. This inference is drawn from the description of its size found in Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqāt. Here we read that according to 'Aḥfān b. Muslim, who gave an approximate thickness of the ṣahīfa, 'it was as thick as a circle made by joining of two thumbs and forefingers.'<sup>1</sup> In other words, it was about five or six inches in diameter.

Hasan was the author of several other books too. Among the known works may be mentioned his commentary on the Qur'ān<sup>2</sup>, Mawā'iz<sup>3</sup>, Masā'il<sup>4</sup> and Kitāb al-Ikhlās.<sup>5</sup>

Hasan was an outstanding scholar of his time, who had transmitted several books (ḥadīth collections) from the companions.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps, it was due to this reputation that the caliph 'Abd al-Malik had demanded from him the traditions of the companions regarding the freedom of will. He not only himself wrote down the traditions but he also dictated them to his students. The commentary on the Qur'ān ascribed to him, was also dictated by him to one of his students.<sup>7</sup> Among those who had received written ahādīth from him may be mentioned Sahl b. Ḥuṣayn b. Muslim al-Bāhilī<sup>8</sup>, Ḥumayd at-Tawīl (d. 143 A.H.)<sup>9</sup>, Mu'āwiya b. 'Abd al-Karīm ath-Thaqafī<sup>10</sup>, Khālīd

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1. Tab, VII, i, 116.

2. Bayān, i, 74.

3. Papyri, i, 17, n.7.

4. Papyri, i, 17, n.7.

5. Bagh, viii, 138.

6. Tahdh, ii, 267, 269.

7. Bayān, i, 74.

8. Tab, VII, i, 127.

9. Tab, VII, ii, 17.; Tahdh, iii, 39.; Mizān, i, 610, no. 2320.

10. Tahdh, x, 214.



al-'Abd,<sup>1</sup> Hishām b. Ḥassān al-Azdī<sup>2</sup>, Ḥawshab b. 'Adīl<sup>3</sup>, and Ḥafṣ b. Sufyān al-Minqarī (d. 130 A.H.).<sup>4</sup>

Ḥasan was an enthusiastic collector of aḥādīth and was keenly interested in legal matters. Whenever he felt some difficulty in solving juristic problems he consulted Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib through correspondence.<sup>5</sup> As regards his own pupils, they used to bring their writings and read them to him.<sup>6</sup> He sometimes lent his own manuscripts to his students for copying. We have been told that Ḥumayd at-Ṭawīl, mentioned above, was benefitted in this way.<sup>7</sup> During dictations, he either used his own books<sup>8</sup> or the writings of his predecessors like Samura b. Jundub and Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh.<sup>9</sup> In fact he used ḥadīth manuscripts quite freely.<sup>10</sup>

However, it is reported that Ḥasan Baṣrī's entire collection with the exception of one ṣaḥīfa (ghayr ṣaḥīfa wāḥida) was burnt.<sup>11</sup> This was done in accordance with his will to this effect.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jarḥ, I, ii, 364.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, xi, 35.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, xi, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, xi, 39.; Ṭab, VII, ii, 35.

<sup>5</sup> Tdh, i, 47.

<sup>6</sup> Kifāya, 349.; Taqyīd, 101, n. 225.; Ṭab, VII, i, 126.

<sup>7</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 126.

<sup>8</sup> His books were widely known and remained in circulation at least till Jāḥiẓ's (d. 255 A.H.) time. (cf. Ṭab, VII, i, 115-116.; Paṭyri, i, 16-17, n.7.; ii, 17, 161, 256.)

<sup>9</sup> Kifāya, 506.; Ṭab, VII, i, 116.; Tahdh, ii, 267, 269.; Jāmi' vi, 52 (Buyū').

<sup>10</sup> Annales, iii, 2488-2493, especially 2489.

<sup>11</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 127.

<sup>12</sup> "Tabari and Early Arab Historians", Encyclopaedia Britannica (9th edition), vol. xxiii, p. 2.

(29) 'Nuskha' of 'Alī b. Yazīd al-Alhānī (d. 110 A.H.):—

It is reported that 'Alī b. Yazīd had collected the traditions in several books.<sup>1</sup> His students are also said to have preserved traditions in written form, which shows that he used to dictate the aḥādīth.

Among his written collections of aḥādīth may be mentioned a nuskha transmitted by 'Ubayd Allāh b. Zahr.<sup>2</sup>

(30) 'Nuskha' of Qāsim b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ash-Shāmī (d. 112 A.H.):—

The successors scholar, Qāsim was one of the distinguished jurists of Damascus.<sup>3</sup> He was considered a trustworthy transmitter by ḥadīth critics.<sup>4</sup>

Among his written record of the ḥadīth was a large collection (nuskha kabīra), which was transmitted by his student 'Alī b. Yazīd.<sup>5</sup>

(31) 'Nuskha' of 'Abd Allāh b. Burayda al-Aslamī (d. 115 A.H.):—

'Abd Allāh b. Burayda transmitted the traditions from his father and many other companions.<sup>6</sup> He was a distinguished scholar of Marw (in Khurasan) where he was appointed as a judge by Yazīd b. al-Muhallab.<sup>7</sup>

As regards his written ḥadīth collection, it is reported that

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, vii, 397.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, vii, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 54.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdh, vii, 396.

<sup>6</sup> Ikmāl, 608.

<sup>7</sup> Mashāhīr, 125, no. 983.

a nuskha containing his traditions was possessed by Ḥusayn b. Wāqid al-Marwazī (d. 159 A.H.), a judge of Marw, perhaps his successor in the office.<sup>1</sup> Abū Rajā' Maṭar b. Ṭahmān (d. 119 A.H.) also received some ahādīth from him in written form.<sup>2</sup>

(32) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of Sulaymān b. Mūsā Al-Asadī (d. 115 A.H.):—

Sulaymān was one of the pious theologians of Damascus and was reckoned among the jurists of Syria.<sup>3</sup> He used to transmit the traditions from Wāthila b. Al-Asqa' (d. 183 A.H.)<sup>4</sup>

He is said to have collected the traditions in a ṣaḥīfa<sup>5</sup>, the size of which is not mentioned in the sources.

(33) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of Ṭalḥa b. Nāfi' (d. c 117 A.H.):—

Ṭalḥa, also known as Abū Sufyān, used to transmit the traditions from 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, Jābir and others.<sup>6</sup> It is reported that his transmission from Jābir was, in fact, from the latter's ṣaḥīfa.<sup>7</sup>

He himself was credited with a ṣaḥīfa, containing one hundred ahādīth.<sup>8</sup> This ṣaḥīfa was transmitted by Al-A'mash.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ma'rifat, 165.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, vi, 158.

<sup>3</sup> Mashāhīr, 179, no. 1415.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, iv, 226.

<sup>5</sup> Mīzān, ii, 225, no. 3518.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, v, 26.; Mīzān, ii, 342, no. 4012.; Jarḥ, II, i, 475.

<sup>7</sup> Mīzān, ii, 342, no. 4012.; Jarḥ, II, i, 475.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, iv, 224.

<sup>9</sup> Tahdh, iv, 224. .

(34) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāh (d. 117 A.H.):—

'Aṭā', the Meccan teacher of the tafsīr fame, was also a scholar of ḥadīth. He was one of the senior teachers of Abū Ḥanīfa, who transmits a number of traditions from him.<sup>1</sup> It is said that the isnād "Abū Ḥanīfa - 'Aṭā' - Ibn 'Abbās" was as reliable a link as the 'golden chain' "Mālik - Nāfi' - Ibn 'Umar".<sup>2</sup>

'Aṭā' had heard the traditions from eminent companions and transmitted them to a group of successors and other scholars. Being a pious theologian, who had performed seventy hajj<sup>3</sup>, he cared very much for the ḥadīth. Shāfi'ī testifies this and says, "No one from amongst the successors was more particular in following the ḥadīth (akthar ittibā'an li 'l-ḥadīth) than 'Aṭā'."<sup>4</sup>

'Aṭā' not only followed and narrated the aḥādīth but also wrote and dictated them.<sup>5</sup> He is credited with a ṣaḥīfa which later came in possession of his son Ya'qūb. The latter describes its contents thus: 'It contains what my father heard from the companions of the Prophet.'<sup>6</sup> 'Aṭā' was also in possession of some written aḥādīth from 'Alī<sup>7</sup>. Among the students who made written collections from 'Aṭā' were: Mu'āwiya b. 'Abd al-Karīm ath-Thaqafī<sup>8</sup>, Qays b. Sa'd<sup>9</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Duwal, i, 74.; Jāmi', xiii, 309 ('Ilal).

<sup>2</sup> Mīzān Kubrā, 48.

<sup>3</sup> Asmā', I, i, 333.

<sup>4</sup> Asmā', I, i; 333.

<sup>5</sup> Fāsil, 35a-35b.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, iii, 329.

<sup>7</sup> Jarḥ, (Intr.), 130.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, x, 214.

<sup>9</sup> Tahdh, vii, 244.

Zakariyya b. Ishāq al-Makkī<sup>1</sup>, and Hawshab b. 'Aqīl.<sup>2</sup>

He also employed the mukātaba method in the transmission of the ḥadīth. Thus it is reported that he wrote down few traditions and sent them to Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb.<sup>3</sup>

(35) 'Sahīfa' and 'Kutub' of Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.):—

Zuhri was one of the most celebrated scholars of his time who made invaluable contribution in the fields of ḥadīth and maghāzī. He also studied poetry<sup>4</sup> and genealogy. He had devoted himself to the studies right from the beginning. His pre-occupation with books forced his wife to say, "I would prefer three rival co-wives to his love for books."<sup>5</sup>

This distinguished scholar had compiled books on the maghāzī, the genealogy and the ḥadīth. His book on the maghāzī<sup>6</sup> has reached

<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, iii, 329.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, xi, 37.

<sup>3</sup> SB, ii, 43 (Buyū'), iii, 240 (Tafsīr al-Qur'ān).

<sup>4</sup> He is said to have memorised a great deal of poetry. (cf. Agh, iv, 248.) It is even reported that his ḥadīth sessions used to be followed by a lecture on poetry. (cf. 'Earliest biographies...' IC, ii, 50.).

<sup>5</sup> Wafayāt, i, 451.; Tārikh (F), i, 204.

Such resentment by a scholar's wife over her husband's books is not unusual. Two centuries before Ibn Khallikān (d. 681 A.H.) [who is the earliest reporter of the statement of Zuhri's wife], Khaṭīb Baghdādī (d. 463 A.H.) had reported similar exasperation of Zubayr b. Bakkar's wife over her husband's books. (cf. Bagh, vii, 471.).

Horowitz seems suspicious about the report regarding Zuhri's wife and calls her statement as "alleged pious exclamation". (cf. 'Earliest biographies...' IC, ii, 49.) There appears no valid basis for Horowitz's doubt about the authenticity of the report especially in presence of a similar anecdote found in an earlier source.

<sup>6</sup> Jarh, III, i, 38-39.; Papyri, i, 17, 75, 76, 88.; ii, 179.

us only in the form of quotations,<sup>1</sup> the reading of which shows that it must have been an extensive work. It appears that a major portion, if not the whole, of this book has been incorporated in Mūsā b. 'Uqba's work on this subject. This inference has been drawn from Yahyā b. Ma'īn's statement according to which 'the best book on the maghāzī is the book of Mūsā from Zuhri'.<sup>2</sup>

Zuhri was also considered an authority on the Ansāb, who had compiled a book on the genealogy of his own tribe.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, he collected some historical data regarding the Umayyad caliphs in a book. In this book he had recorded the births, the deaths and the duration of the reigns of the caliphs.<sup>4</sup> Few quotations from this work are found in Tabari's monumental Annales.<sup>5</sup>

But Zuhri's main contribution was in the field of ḥadīth. The traditionists recognise him as a reliable authority on the ḥadīth. He had become interested in this subject sometimes during his twenties<sup>6</sup>, and had devoted the rest of his life - a considerably long period of about fifty years - in learning, preserving and transmitting, both orally and in writing, the traditions. It is said that he spent exorbitant amount of money for the sake of ḥadīth.<sup>7</sup> It is

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<sup>1</sup> SM, ii, 653 (Radā'); Futūḥ, 31, 36, 39.; Musnad, vi, 194-197.; Ashraf, i, 286, 445, 545, 549, 550, 552.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, x, 362.

<sup>3</sup> Tdh, i, 105.; Tārīkh al-Islām, v, 143.; Pāsil, 37b.

<sup>4</sup> "Earliest biographies..." IC, ii, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Annales, ii, 428, 1269.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, II, i, 131.; Tārīkh al-Islām, v, 138.; Pāsil, 6a, where we read that in the time of the successors the students were about twenty years of age when they started learning traditions.

<sup>7</sup> Tdh, i, 97.

further reported that he held regular ḥadīth sessions and had attracted a large number of pupils.<sup>1</sup>

Being a great protagonist of written ḥadīth he used to write down all he heard<sup>2</sup> on any writing material at hand. It is said that he used to carry wooden tablets (alwāḥ) and note books (suhuf)<sup>3</sup> to record traditions, and at times when these writing materials were not available he borrowed some, from his <sup>teachers.</sup> colleagues.<sup>4</sup> He even sometimes wrote on the soles of his shoes.<sup>5</sup>

How keen he was about writing ḥadīth can be seen from the report in which Abū 'z-Zinād's (d. 131 A.H.) practice of recording has been compared with that of Zuhri's. According to this report, while the former wrote down only those traditions that dealt with lawful and unlawful (al-halāl wa 'l-harām), the latter recorded everything.<sup>6</sup> It is further stated that Zuhri wrote down the traditions not only of Muḥammad, but also of the companions.<sup>7</sup> This has been confirmed by Ṣāliḥ b. Kaysān, his fellow traditionist, who states that while Zuhri considered the traditions from the companions as 'sunna' and wrote it down, I was against its recording, for to me it did not constitute 'sunna'. Ṣāliḥ, however, regretted in his later life for not doing so and said, "He (i.e. Zuhri) wrote it down and I did not, eventually he succeeded and I failed."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 387-388.; Bidāya, ix, 342, 345.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 73.; Tdh, i, 103.

<sup>3</sup> Tdh, i, 103.

<sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 59, where it is reported that he often borrowed a warāqa (sheet) from his <sup>teacher</sup> colleague Al-A'raj.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 107.

<sup>6</sup> Bayān, i, 73.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, II, ii, 135.; Bayān, i, 76-77.; Taqyīd, 106-107.; Bidāya, xi, 344.

<sup>8</sup> Tab, II, ii, 135.; Bayān, i, 76-77.; Taqyīd, 106-107.; Bidāya, ix, 344.



Being himself an advocate of writing, Zuhri used to advise his students to note down the traditions. He instructed his pupils to bring their inkpots to the class<sup>1</sup> - a clear indication that he encouraged writing of the traditions. A similar sentiment has been expressed in the following statement of his: 'To come to the class without a note book is disgraceful.'<sup>2</sup>

Zuhri not only urged his students to write down the ahādīth but he himself played an important role in the preservation and documentation of the traditions. Not only did he dictate the traditions to his students but he also approved both the munāwala<sup>3</sup> and the mukātaba<sup>4</sup> methods of transmission. As a result of this policy a large body of written ahādīth came in circulation in Zuhri's time.

Before we discuss the ḥadīth collections of Zuhri, it seems important to consider a report which apparently shows Zuhri's disapproval of writing down the ḥadīth. The report in question is the statement of Zuhri himself, which runs as follows: "We disliked writing down the knowledge (ḥadīth) until those (Umayyad) princes (Umarā') compelled us to take recourse to it and then we no longer saw any reason to withhold it from any of the muslims."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Imlā', 155.

<sup>2</sup> Hilya, iii, 366.

<sup>3</sup> Receiving the traditions in written form and transmitting them without reading over to the teacher. (cf. Tadrib, 129.; Kifāya, 466.; Tahdīth, 187-188.)

<sup>4</sup> Receiving the traditions by correspondance with or without permission to transmit them to others. (cf. Tadrib, 129.; Tahdīth, 187-188.)

<sup>5</sup> Tab, II, ii, 135.; Taqyid, 107.; Bayān, i, 76-77.; Mahomet, i, p. xxxiii.; Mst, ii, 38-39/47.; 'Al-Zuhri...', BSOAS, XIX, ii, 12.; 'Origin of writing...', JAB, xxv, 322, no. 71, where Sprenger reads the word "akrahanā" as "akrahnā" taking "Umarā'" in the objective case. Due to this reading, he wrongly interprets the statement as "we induced also those chiefs" - a translation not very clear.

The above statement of Zuhri has led Goldziher, and following him Guillaume and others, to reach some erroneous conclusions. Goldziher, taking the word kitāb (lit. writing) in the sense of 'fabricating', deduces that Zuhri's disapproval of writing ḥadīth referred to the Umayyad's pressure to fabricate aḥādīth in their favour.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Guillaume comments, "If any external proof were needed of the forgery of tradition in the Umayyad period, it may be found in the express statement of Al Zuhri: 'These princes have compelled us to write hadith'.<sup>2</sup>

The conclusions reached by Goldziher and Guillaume on the basis of this ḥadīth have been justly contested by other scholars. While A.A. Duri considers the report itself as false and dismisses it by calling it a 'later echo of traditionists',<sup>3</sup> the contemporary modern scholar, Nabia Abbott gives the following verdict on this matter. She says, "The hasty assumption by Sprenger and Muir, followed by Guillaume... and others, that Umayyad pressure forced Zuhri to large-scale forgery of ḥadīth should be definitely and finally abandoned."<sup>4</sup>

This conclusive verdict notwithstanding, the report can be examined and explained in different other ways. It appears that the statement of Zuhri has nothing to do with the fabrication of ḥadīth in favour of the Umayyads. Instead, it refers to a purely technical matter with regard to the transmission of the ḥadīth - the question

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<sup>1</sup> Mst., ii, 38-39/47.

<sup>2</sup> Traditions, 50.

<sup>3</sup> 'Al-Zuhri...', BSOAS, XIX, ii, 12.

<sup>4</sup> Papyri, ii, 33, n. 8.

of approval or disapproval of the mukātaba method. Zuhri, like his other colleagues, had so far insisted that the traditions should be read over to the teacher before they could be transmitted to other pupils. In other words, he disapproved of giving the ḥadīth to his students in written form.<sup>1</sup> But when he was forced by Umayyad caliphs to make large collection of the traditions, thus making the knowledge of ḥadīth accessible to the public, he changed his attitude and approved thereafter all the transmission procedures, including that of mukātaba, to disseminate the knowledge of ḥadīth. Thus we see that the ruling caliphs did not force Zuhri to fabricate ahādīth but to get rid of the traditional bias of withholding knowledge from the public. Perhaps, Zuhri refers to this pressure of the princes (umarā') in the above report.

Furthermore, the word 'akrahanā', particularly the pronominal suffix 'nā' is very significant in the above statement of Zuhri. Used in the plural form, it signifies a group of ḥadīth scholars and not Zuhri alone in which case the pronominal suffix 'nī' would have been used. The plural form 'nā', as against the singular 'nī' is indicative of two important points.

Firstly, it does not single out Zuhri as being a tool in the hands of the Umayyad rulers, who are said to have patronised him either to fabricate ahādīth in their favour<sup>2</sup> or to legalise and

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<sup>1</sup> 'Earliest biographies...', IC, ii, 47.

<sup>2</sup> Mst, ii, 37-38/46.; Traditions, 48. The views of Goldziher and Guillaume have, however, been refuted by Horovitz and Ruth Mackensen. Thus agreeing with Horovitz, Ruth Mackensen remarks, "One would rather agree with Horovitz that whereas at the behest of the caliphs he (Zuhri) departed from his former reticence and dictated traditions, this innovation does not prove that he invented traditions in their interests." (cf. "Arabic books...", AJSL, liii, p, 243.)

justify certain actions of theirs.<sup>1</sup> Such a conclusion cannot be reached on the basis of this statement, for it does not refer, as the pronominal suffix 'nā' suggests, to one individual, namely Zuhri, but to a group of traditionists.

Secondly, it provides a corroborative proof for 'Umar II's commission to Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm of Medina to record the aḥādīth and sunna - a report often suspected.<sup>2</sup> It seems that Zuhri in this statement refers to the above order of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz given to him as well. Just as 'Umar had written to Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm and to Sālim b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar<sup>3</sup>, to record the Prophet's sunna and the rasā'il of 'Umar I, respectively, in the same manner he had demanded from Zuhri and other competent scholars to make ḥadīth collections.<sup>4</sup> This commission and its completion has been described by Zuhri himself, who says, "'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz ordered us to collect the sunna. In pursuance of this order we wrote many volumes, the copies of which were sent to various parts of the empire."<sup>5</sup>

It is to this commission of 'Umar II that Zuhri seems to refer in his statement that these princes have compelled us to write down the 'ilm. Since Zuhri, like his colleagues, was unwilling to give 'ready-made' knowledge in the form of written manuscript, as was

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<sup>1</sup> Mst, ii, 35-36/44.; Traditions, 48.

<sup>2</sup> Mst, ii, 210-211/195-196.; Traditions, 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> Hilya, ii, 194.; v, 284-286.; Khulafā', 231.

<sup>4</sup> Mst, ii, 210/195.; Fath, i, 57, where it is reported that 'Umar II had written to the scholars of all parts of the Empire (kataba ilā 'l-āfāq) asking them to look for the ḥadīth of the Prophet and to collect them.; Fāsil, 35b.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, i, 76.; Anwāl, 578-580.; Mughīth, 239.; As-sunna, 494.

demanding by the caliph, he expressed his inner feeling of disapproval in the words: "these umarā' compelled us...."

But Zuhri's reticence could not last long. We find that he carried out Umar II's order and collected a large number of traditions in books. In addition to this, it is reported that he was persuaded by Hishām (105-125 A.H.)<sup>1</sup> to dictate the ahādīth to his sons. About the compliance of Hishām's desire to have Zuhri's transmission in written form, we have several reports. According to one, he had dictated, twice, four hundred ahādīth to one of Hishām's sons.<sup>2</sup> Then it is reported that Shu'ayb b. Abī Ḥamza, the secretary of Hishām, used to write for the caliph himself.<sup>3</sup>

It seems that after Umar II's order and Hishām's inducement, Zuhri changed his attitude with respect to written ḥadīth. Now, he not only began to dictate freely but also agreed to give or even send to his students and other scholars 'ready-made' collections of ḥadīth, without asking the recipients to read them to him.<sup>4</sup> To take an example, he sent few ahādīth in written form to Ibn Abī Dhi'b<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, Ibn Jurayj, another pupil of Zuhri, was given an apistle (juz') to be copied and transmitted without being read out to the teacher.<sup>6</sup> In fact, Ibn Abī Dhi'b and Ibn Jurayj were not the only

<sup>1</sup> As Zuhri was both a muhaddith and a faqīh (cf. Tab, II, ii, 135), Hishām used to consult him on legal matters and had appointed him as a tutor for his sons. (cf. Tdh, i, 103.; Papyri, ii, 33.; "Von Kremer's edition...", JASB, 1856, p. 210.)

<sup>2</sup> Tdh, i, 110.; Bidāya, ix, 342.; Fāsil, 39b.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, iv, 351-352.; Tārīkh al-Islām, v, 151.; Kifāya, 476.

<sup>4</sup> Kifāya, 458, where it is mentioned that Zuhri handed over a book (tumār) to one of his pupils, saying, "These are my ahādīth, take them and relate from it (hādhihī ahādīthī khudhā fa ḥaddith binā) Tārīkh al-Islām, v, 149.; "Von Kremer's edition...", JASB, 1856, p. 211.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdh, ix, 305, 307.; Kifāya, 443.

<sup>6</sup> Tdh, i, 161.; Jarh, II, ii, 357-358.; Tahdh, ii, 465. Ibn Jurayj, on another occasion brought few ahādīth, written on three sheets (thalāth qirtās) to Zuhri and sought his permission to relate. (cf. Kifāya, 457.)

pupils of Zuhri who were given written aḥādīth to transmit on teacher's authority. The students like 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. 'Amr al-Awzā'i<sup>1</sup>, Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb<sup>2</sup>, 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar<sup>3</sup>, Sufyān b. Sa'īd ath-Thawri<sup>4</sup>, Ruzayh b. Ḥukaym<sup>5</sup>, Mūsā b. 'Ubayda ar-Rabzī<sup>6</sup>, Muḥammad b. al-Walīd az-Zabīdī<sup>7</sup> and Jā'far b. Rabī'a<sup>8</sup>, had all received from Zuhri the aḥādīth in written form.

In addition to the pupils to whom Zuhri sent or gave aḥādīth in written form, there were others who either copied the traditions from his manuscripts or wrote down his lectures and read them out to him.<sup>9</sup> Among these may be mentioned the son of Hishām to whom he had dictated 400 aḥādīth<sup>10</sup>, Ziyād b. Sa'd<sup>11</sup>, Yūnus b. Yazīd<sup>12</sup>, Yaḥyā b. Abī Unaysa<sup>13</sup>, 'Uqayl b. Khālīd al-Aylī<sup>14</sup>, 'Ubayd Allāh

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, vi, 241.; Jarḥ, II, ii, 266-267.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, ix, 447.; SB, iii, 478. (Talāo).

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 456, 457, 467.

<sup>4</sup> Tārīkh al-Islām, v, 149.

<sup>5</sup> SB, i, 227-228 (Jum'a).

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, x, 360.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, VII, ii, 169.; Jarḥ, IV, i, 111-112.; Tdh, i, 153-154.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, ix, 447.; SB, i, 218 (Adhān).; SAD, ii, 309 (Nikāh), ḥadīth no. 2084.

<sup>9</sup> Kifāya, 387, 456, 457. Mālik says, "I saw 'ilm (ḥadīth) being read out to Zuhri. (cf. Kifāya, 387.)

<sup>10</sup> Tdh, i, 103-104.

<sup>11</sup> Jarḥ, (Intr.), 39.

<sup>12</sup> Tahdh, iv, 307.; vii, 256.; xi, 450-451.

<sup>13</sup> Mizān, iv, 365, no. 9463.

<sup>14</sup> The book prepared by him later came in possession of his nephew. It contained 200 to 300 traditions. (cf. Jarḥ, III, ii, 43.; Tahdh, iv, 289.; vii, 42, 256.; SAD, iv, 231 (Ḥudūd), ḥadīth no. 4488.).



b. Abī Ziyād ar-Ruṣāfi<sup>1</sup>, Sulaymān b. Kathīr al-ʿAbdī<sup>2</sup>, Shuʿayb b. Abī Ḥamza<sup>3</sup>,  
 Mūsā b. ʿUqba<sup>4</sup>, Maʿmar b. Rāshid<sup>5</sup>, Ismāʿīl b. Rāfiʿ b. ʿUwaymir<sup>6</sup>,  
 Hishām b. Bashīr as-Sulamī<sup>7</sup>, Ayyūb b. Mūsā<sup>8</sup>, ʿAbd ar-Razzāq b. ʿUmar<sup>9</sup>,  
 ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. Yazīd ad-Dimaṣqī<sup>10</sup>, ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. Namira al-Yaḥṣubī<sup>11</sup>  
 and ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. Khālīd b. Musāfir<sup>12</sup>.

A number of other scholars had incidentally found Zuhri's books and made use of them. This category of scholars included Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh, Zuhri's own nephew (Ibn Akhī'z-Zuhri)<sup>13</sup>, Muʿāwiya b. Yaḥyā Aṣ-Ṣadafī<sup>14</sup>, and the Khurāsānian, Ishāq b. Rāshid in whose hands fell a book of Zuhri while he was passing through Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tab, VII, ii, 175.; Mizān, iii, 8, no. 5361.; Tahdh, ii, 207.; vii, 13.; Jarḥ, II, ii, 316.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, iv, 216.

<sup>3</sup> He wrote down the traditions from Zuhri for Hishām. (cf. Tdh, i, 205). He also made his personal copies, which were later inherited by his son. The son is reported to have shown this book to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who praised the manuscript for accuracy of its contents, beautiful vowelings and careful pointing. (cf. Tahdh, iv, 351-352.; Tdh, i, 205.; Jarḥ, II, i, 345.; Kifāya, 476.; Papyri, ii, 177.) The nuskha of Shuʿayb has survived to this day. It is preserved in Az-Zāhiriyya library, Damascus, bearing No. majmūʿ 120, folio, 68-87.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, x, 361-362.

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 411.; Jarḥ (Intr.), 205.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, i, 296.

<sup>7</sup> The manuscript prepared by him contained 300 traditions. (cf. Mizān, iv, 308, no. 9250.; Tahdh, xi, 60.)

<sup>8</sup> SB, ii, 440-441 (Fadāʿil Ashāb an-Nabī).

<sup>9</sup> Jarḥ, III, i, 39.

<sup>10</sup> Tahdh, vi, 295.

<sup>11</sup> Tahdh, vi, 287-288.

<sup>12</sup> Tahdh, vi, 165.

<sup>13</sup> Jarḥ (Intr.), 260.

<sup>14</sup> Tahdh, x, 220.

<sup>15</sup> Papyri, ii, 182, citing Ibn ʿAsākir's At-Tārīkh al-Kabīr, ii, 438-439.



On account of Zuhri's preoccupation with writing and dictating the traditions and also due to his students' zeal to make their own collections of ḥadīth, Zuhri and his pupils came to be known as aṣḥāb al-kutub (people with books).<sup>1</sup> The age of Zuhri itself was called the age of the manuscript.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the appearance of a large number of ḥadīth manuscripts in this period was partly due to Zuhri's employment of all the methods of ḥadīth transmission, namely the ʿard, the mukātaba, the munāwala, the ijāza and even the wijāda.<sup>3</sup> As a result of this practice of Zuhri, a large number of ḥadīth manuscripts - ṣaḥīfa, nuskha, kitāb, juzʿ - both large and small, were prepared by his students. It does not, therefore, surprise us when we hear Mālik b. Anas saying, "I have seven boxes full of Zuhri's ḥadīth."

A cursory glance over the large number of Zuhri's pupils and the written records in their possession will show that Zuhri was a devoted ḥadīth scholar, who not only narrated the traditions orally but had dictated them to his students for preservation in books. The sources have cited many ṣaḥīfas, juzʿ, and nuskha attributed to Zuhri. The famous among them are as follows:

- (1) A juzʿ, which he handed over to Ibn Jurayj.<sup>4</sup>
- (2) A ṣaḥīfa, given to ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. ʿAmr al-Awzāʿī, with permission to transmit its traditions on his authority.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 35, referring Ibn ʿAsākir's at-Tārīkh al-Kabīr, vi, 379.; Papyri, ii, 181, 182, 184.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, ii, 184.; Tdh, i, 149-151.

<sup>3</sup> For definitions of these terms, see supra, chapter IV, p. 229, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, ii, 465.; Jarḥ, II, ii, 357-358.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdh, vi, 241.; Kifāya, 460.

- (3) A nuskha, in possession of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Namira al-Yaḥsubī.<sup>1</sup>
- (4) A kitāb kabīr (large book) in possession of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Yazīd ad-Dimashqī.<sup>2</sup>
- (5) A ṣaḥīfa, containing 300 traditions, written from Zuhri by Hushaym b. Bashīr as-Sulamī at Mecca.<sup>3</sup>
- (6) A ṣaḥīfa, in possession of Sulaymān b. Kathīr al-'Abdī.<sup>4</sup>
- (7) A ṣaḥīfa, handed over to 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar to copy and transmit.<sup>5</sup>
- (8) A nuskha, in possession of Zakariyya b. 'Isā.<sup>6</sup>
- (9) A ṣaḥīfa, containing 300 aḥādīth attributed to Zuhri himself.<sup>7</sup>
- (10) A kitāb, in possession of Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd, who brought it to Zuhri and read it to him for the latter's permission to transmit it on his authority.<sup>8</sup>

In order to have a clear idea about the huge collection of Zuhri's ḥadīth manuscripts one has to bear in mind the long period during which his literary activities continued. We know that he enjoyed the patronage of the Umayyad rulers from the time of 'Abd al-Malik<sup>9</sup> till his own death at the end of Hishām's long reign.<sup>10</sup> During this long period of about 45 years<sup>11</sup>, he was

<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, vi, 287-288.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, vi, 295.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, xi, 60.; Mizān, iv, 308, no. 9250.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, iv, 216.

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 467.

<sup>6</sup> Payyri, ii, 182.

<sup>7</sup> Bagh, xiv, 87.

<sup>8</sup> Kifāya, 388.; Mst, ii, 38/47.

<sup>9</sup> The date of Zuhri's entry into 'Abd Al-Malik's court is uncertain. Most probably, he associated himself with the caliph during Hishām b. Ismā'īl's governorship of Medina (82-86 A.H.) - [cf. Tab, II, ii, 135.; VII, ii, 157.; Hilya, iii, 367-369.]

<sup>10</sup> Tārīkh al-ʿIslām, v, 140.

<sup>11</sup> Hilya, iii, 362.

preoccupied with writing and dictating ahādīth. This resulted in the accumulation of large number of hadīth manuscripts. The encouragement and inducement by almost all the Umayyad rulers, especially 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and Hishām, made the task easier and Zuhri became the author of numerous books.

It is reported that most of Zuhri's manuscripts were in the court library of Hishām. How large was this collection of Zuhri's books, has been described by his pupil, Ma'mar b. Rāshid. He said, "After Walīd II's assassination when Zuhri's books were shifted from the state treasury it needed beasts of burden."<sup>1</sup>

On account of Zuhri's reputation as a muhaddith and a faqīh, we can expect that most of the books in this collection dealt with the hadīth and the fich.

(36) 'Kitāb' of Khālīd b. Abī 'Imrān (d. 125/129 A.H.):—

The Tunisian scholar, Khālīd b. Abī 'Imrān is reported to have possessed a large written collection (kitāb kabīr) of the traditions transmitted by Sālim b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar (d. 106 A.H.), Sulaymān b. Yasār (d. 107 A.H.) and Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (d. 108 A.H.).<sup>2</sup> The story of Khālīd's writing of Qāsim's and Sālim's ahādīth is quite interesting. It is reported that he called on these Medinan scholars and requested them to dictate to him the traditions of the Prophet. When, owing to their prejudice against written ahādīth<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Tab, II, ii, 136.; Hilya, iii, 361.; Tdh, i, 106.; Papyri, i, 23.; ii, 181.; "Earliest biographies...", IC, ii, 48.; Tārīkh al-Islām, v, 141.

<sup>2</sup> Jarḥ, I, ii, 345.; Papyri, i, 22.; ii, 214.

<sup>3</sup> It is to be noted that both Qāsim and Sālim left their bias after some time and even dictated the traditions to their students. (cf. Jarḥ, I, ii, 345.; Fāsil, 63b.; Tahdh, xii, 39.; Papyri, i, 22.; ii, 13, 43, 197-198, 214.)

they refused to comply with his request, he shamed them into dictating a large number of traditions by threatening to go back and accuse the scholars of the city of the Prophet of withholding the religious knowledge from others.<sup>1</sup>

Khālīd not only possessed written aḥādīth with him but he also employed mukātaba method in transmitting them to others. Thus we read that Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī and Al-Layth b. Sa'd had received some aḥādīth from him in written form.<sup>2</sup>

(37) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of Bakr b. Wā'il b. Dā'ūd (d. c 130 A.H.):—

Bakr b. Wā'il was an advocate of writing ḥadīth. He had preserved some traditions in a ṣaḥīfa, which came in possession of his father,<sup>3</sup> who outlived him<sup>4</sup>. The father is reported to have transmitted the aḥādīth from this ṣaḥīfa.<sup>5</sup>

(38) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of Hammām b. Munabbih (d. 131 A.H.):—

Hammām, a pupil of Abū Hurayra, had collected a large number of traditions from his teacher in a ṣaḥīfa.<sup>6</sup> It was preserved and transmitted by Hammām's pupil, Ma'mar b. Rāshid, who, in his turn, transmitted it to the next generation, when 'Abd ar-Razzāq b. Hammām b. Nāfi'al-Ḥimyārī (d. 211 A.H.) preserved it separately, without incorporating it into his own Muṣannaf.<sup>7</sup> Later, it was

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<sup>1</sup> Panyri, ii, 13, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Annales, iii, 2374.; Fāsil, 48b.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 506.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, i, 488.

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 506.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad, ii, 312-318.; Tahdh, i, 95, where it is described as 'nuskha mashhūra'.

<sup>7</sup> Kifāya, 521.; Ṣaḥīfa, 44.

received, in its entirety, by two of 'Abd ar-Razzāq's pupils, namely Ahmad b. Hanbal and Abū 'l Ḥasan Ahmad b. Yūsuf as-Sulami. While the former included it in his Musnad,<sup>1</sup> the latter transmitted it to the next generation. This written transmission, in its entire purity, continued for many generations, until in 1933 it was first discovered and in 1953 first edited and published by a contemporary scholar Dr. Ḥamīdullah.<sup>2</sup>

Ḥammām was keenly interested in reading, right from the beginning. We know that he used to buy books<sup>3</sup> for his brother Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110 A.H.), who was famed for his encyclopaedic knowledge and excessive reading and writing.<sup>4</sup> It was perhaps due to his literary bent of mind and love of sunna that Ḥammām wrote down the traditions narrated by Abū Hurayra and collected them in a ṣaḥīfa. The ṣaḥīfa containing 138 traditions, was named as 'as-ṣaḥīfa as-ṣaḥīha', probably on the pattern of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ' 'as-ṣaḥīfa as-sādiqa'. While the traditions of this ṣaḥīfa are sporadically found in the Ṣaḥīḥayn and other canonical ḥadīth works<sup>5</sup>, the Musnad of Ibn Ḥanbal has absorbed it integrally.<sup>6</sup>

Significant in this connection is Ḥamīdullah's comment following the discovery of Ḥammām's ṣaḥīfa. He says, "We can trust (after

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<sup>1</sup> Musnad, ii, 312-318.

<sup>2</sup> Ḥamīdullah (ed), Ṣaḥīfa Ḥammām b. Munabbih, Damascus, 1372/1953.

<sup>3</sup> It is not certain whether these books were in Arabic. Most probably they were not.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, V, 359.; Tahdh, xi, 67.; Masādir, 150.; Med.Islam, 242.; Paryri, ii, 6.; Sira (Guil.), xv (Intr.), referring his works (i) Kitāb al-Mubtadā and (ii) Maghāzī.

<sup>5</sup> Tdh, i, 95.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad, ii, 312-318.

discovery of Hammām's ṣaḥīfa) that the apparent loss of other earlier works such as the collections of Anas and 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ need not be much deplored as in fact they have been fully conserved in the different chapters of the voluminous Musnad of Ibn Hanbal.<sup>1</sup> He further says, "This also shows how the works of the time of the Prophet and his Companions were amalgamated in the larger works of the Tābiʿūn (the Followers of the Companions of the Prophet), and the works of these latter have been conserved in the still larger compendia of Ibn Hanbal, Bukhari, Muslim, etc., and the earlier works had thus become practically superfluous."<sup>2</sup>

(39) 'Ṣaḥīfa' of 'Alā' b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān (c.50-139 A.H.):—

The Medinan scholar of Zuhri's fame, 'Alā', had collected the traditions in ṣaḥīfas. Although he outlived Zuhri, his literary career had started as early as the second half of the first century, as his life span indicates.

He seems to have preserved the traditions for future generations, for he wanted to transmit his ṣaḥīfa in toto and not partly. He used to say to those who wanted to copy out the traditions from his ṣaḥīfa, "Either you copy all of it or copy none of it at all."<sup>3</sup>

He was considered an authority on ḥadīth in Medina where his

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<sup>1</sup> Hamidullah, "Early History of the Compilation of the Hadith", Islamic Review, May 1949, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Hamidullah, "Early History of the Compilation of the Hadith", Islamic Review, May, 1949, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Maʿārif, 168.

books were most popular.<sup>1</sup> A nuskha from him was transmitted by Rūḥ b. al-Qāsim (d. 141 A.H.) which later came in possession of Yazīd b. Zurayḥ.<sup>2</sup>

(40) 'Saḥīfa' of Ḥumayd at-Tawīl (d. 142 A.H.):—

Ḥumayd, the Basran scholar, was in possession of a saḥīfa, which he had copied from the ḥadīth manuscript of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.<sup>3</sup> From the account given by Ḥumayd of this saḥīfa (which he had borrowed and copied from Ḥasan), it appears that it was a fairly large collection. He states that it was a roll as thick as a circle made by joining of thumbs and forefingers.<sup>4</sup>

Ḥumayd is reported to have transmitted the aḥādīth from 'Ikrima (d. 105/107 A.H.), the client and literary heir of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās.<sup>5</sup>

(41) 'Saḥīfa' of Hishām b. 'Urwa (d. 146 A.H.):—

The pupil of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar and 'Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr, Hishām was an advocate of writing traditions. He was advised by his father (also his teacher) not only to write down the aḥādīth but also to revise the written material.<sup>6</sup> He himself reports that once his father asked him whether he had committed the traditional material to writing, whereupon he replied in affirmative. The

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, viii, 187.

<sup>2</sup> Kifāya, 321.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VII, i, 126, ii, 20.; Taqyīd, 101, n.; Tahdh, iii, 39.; Mizān, i, 610, no. 2320.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, VII, i, 116, 126.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, V, 212-216.; Ma'ārif, 231-232.; Annales, iii, 2483-2484.; Jarḥ, II, ii, 7-9.

<sup>6</sup> Imlā', 78-79.



father then asked if he had revised it after writing, on which he replied in negative. Hearing this reply, the father remarked, "It means that you have not written down",<sup>1</sup> implying that a writing without revising is not trustworthy.

Hishām used to dictate the ahādīth to his students, who made their individual collections and read them out to the teacher. One such collection, known as ṣaḥīfa (variant 'nuskha'), was made by Ibn Jurayj, who brought it to him to obtain his permission to transmit.<sup>2</sup> His other pupils, like Khālīd b. al-Ḥārith<sup>3</sup> and Nūḥ b. Maryam<sup>4</sup> had also written down the ahādīth from him.

Hishām also approved of the mukātaba method of the ḥadīth transmission. Accordingly, he sometimes wrote down the ahādīth himself and handed over the manuscript to his students. Layth b. Sa'd, for instance, received some ahādīth from him in this form.<sup>5</sup>

(b) Other written records of the Companions:

After discussing the ṣaḥīfa, risāla, nuskha etc. of the companions and the successors, we now turn to such general written collections of the companions which are not known by these terms. This section will be devoted entirely to the writings of the companions. The written records of the successors and other scholars will be discussed separately in the next section. The

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<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 350.; Bayān, i, 77.; Fāsil, 64a.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, V, 362.; Kifāya, 459.; Ma'ārif, 167.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 390.

<sup>4</sup> Ma'ārifat, 164. .

<sup>5</sup> SB, ii, 319-320 (Bad'al-Khalq); iii, 16 (Manāqib al-Ansār).

chronological order for the scholars, in the following two sections will be the same as we have adopted so far i.e. according to their dates of death.

(1) Subay'a bint al-Hārith al-Aslamīya (d. 10 A.H.):-

A group of people (jamā'a) are reported to have transmitted the traditions from the woman traditionist Subay'a.<sup>1</sup> It is not certain whether she possessed any written collection of ahādīth, but we do find references of her sending, at least one ḥadīth, in written form, to 'Amr b. 'Utba and Masrūq b. al-Ajda' on their request. The ḥadīth sent by her dealt with the question of 'idda (period of waiting).<sup>2</sup>

(2) Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet (d. 11 A.H.):-

Fāṭima was a reliable narrator of ḥadīth. In addition to her husband, 'Alī and her sons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, a group of people (jamā'a) have transmitted traditions from her.<sup>3</sup>

She is said to have possessed few ahādīth in written form as well.<sup>4</sup>

(3) Abū Shāh, the Yemenite:-

When on the occasion of the conquest of Mecca in 8 A.H., the Prophet delivered an impressive sermon, a Yemenite, named Abū Shāh, stood up and requested the Prophet to have the sermon written down

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<sup>1</sup> Ikmāl, 599.

<sup>2</sup> SIM, i, 625-626 (Ṭalāq).; Kifāya, 481.

<sup>3</sup> Ikmāl, 613.

<sup>4</sup> Kāfī, ii, 667.; Taqyīd, 99, n. 218, citing al-Kharā'itī's Makārim al-Akhḥlāq, (Cairo, 1350, A.H.), p. 37.

for him. Granting his request, the Prophet ordered someone: 'write it down for Abū Shāh.'<sup>1</sup>

Supposing that the order must have been carried out, we can conclude that Abū Shāh had some of the Prophet's ahādīth in written form.

(4) 'Abd Allāh b. 'Ukaym al-Juhānī:-

'Abd Allāh b. 'Ukaym possessed a written ḥadīth regarding the law about the dead animals. It is reported on his own authority that the Prophet had sent him this ḥadīth, in written form, two months before the latter's death.<sup>2</sup>

(5) Abū Bakr (d. 13 A.H.):-

Abū Bakr is reported to have written down 500 ahādīth<sup>3</sup> of the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> But when he anticipated his death he destroyed this collection.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bayān, i, 70.; SB, i, 40-41 ('ilm).; ii, 95 (Luṭa).; iv, 318 (Diyāt).; SM, ii, 603-604 (Ḥajj).; Jāmi', x, 135 ('ilm).; Istī'āb, iv, 106.; Isāba, iv, 100, no. 606.; Fāsil, 34a.

<sup>2</sup> Musnad, iv, 310-311.; Musnad (ṭ), no. 1293.; Jāmi', vii, 234-236 (Libās).; SAD, iv, 94-95 (Libās), ḥadīth nos. 4127-4128.

<sup>3</sup> According to Nawawī, the collection of Abū Bakr contained 142 traditions (cf. Asmā', I, ii, 182.)

<sup>4</sup> Tdh, i, 5.; Adwā', 42.; As-Sunna, 309-310.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 285.; Saḥīfa, 28-29.

<sup>5</sup> Tdh, i, 5. It is reported that Abū Bakr destroyed the manuscript, saying that he might have heard these ahādīth from unreliable narrators. Dhahabī rightly describes this statement as false. (cf. Tdh, i, 5.) Abū Bakr being so closely attached to the Prophet needed no intermediate narrator for latter's ahādīth and so the question of unreliable narrator does not arise. Furthermore, Abū Bakr's reported cautious approach in accepting few traditions from the companions disproves this assertion.

Abū Rayya quotes the above report of ~~destroying~~<sup>destroying</sup> the manuscript by Abū Bakr in support of his thesis that writing of the tradition was forbidden by the Prophet.<sup>1</sup> He says that Abū Bakr's destruction of the written record of the Prophet's ahādīth was due to the Prophet's interdiction to write down his traditions. But this argument is untenable on purely historical grounds. Abū Bakr, being too close to the Prophet - even his companion in the cave during the Flight - could not have remained uninformed about this interdiction. Had there been such a prohibition by the Prophet, Abū Bakr would not have written down the ahādīth in the first place. Further, the report goes against Abū Rayya's own theory in the sense that it proves the early existence of written ahādīth, no matter that it was burnt.

The report of collecting and burning of the ḥadīth material by Abū Bakr seems genuine on the following grounds:

The facts that Abū Bakr wrote the charter of Surāqa b. Mālik during the critical time of the flight from Mecca to Medina,<sup>2</sup> that he initiated and took practical interest in the writing and compilation of the Qur'ān<sup>3</sup>, that he sent written laws about taxation to Anas b. Mālik<sup>4</sup>, that he nominated 'Umar as his successor to the caliphate through writing<sup>5</sup>, coupled with the fact that he constantly employed writing in settling the most disturbing problem of

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<sup>1</sup> Adwā', 42.

<sup>2</sup> Sīra, 332.; Imtā', i, 42.; Wathā'iq, no. 'Za', p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Maṣāḥif, 5-9.

<sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 87.; SB, i, 366-368 (Zakāt).; iv, 339 (Ḥiyāl).; SAD, ii, 129-130, ḥadīth no. 1567 (Zakāt); SN, v, 18-23 (Zakāt); SIL, i, 551-552 (Zakāt).

<sup>5</sup> Annales, i, 2137-2141.; Early Islam, 193.

apostasy,<sup>1</sup> all go to prove that he was a staunch supporter of writing. Viewed in this light, we can expect that Abū Bakr, who was zealous of following the sunna of the Prophet, must have preserved some written record of his actions and sayings. It was, therefore, most likely that he made at least a small collection of 500 aḥādīth.

The reason of his destruction of the manuscripts was, perhaps, the same as that of other destroyers of ḥadīth records. That the ḥadīth collections were destroyed in the past is a reality which need not be proved. It is only the motive behind the destruction which has to be sought. In this particular case, Abū Bakr was perhaps apprehensive of the misuse of his ḥadīth collections after his death. Fearing lest the wave of apostasy, wide spread during his caliphate, might affect the body of the ḥadīth, he destroyed his written collection. In addition to this, believing in the superiority of the Qur'ān over the ḥadīth, he was more interested in the codification of the former than that of the latter. Like 'Umar during his own reign, Abū Bakr in this earlier period might have been confronted with the problem of rivalry between the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth. It seems that the latter had become so popular that there arose a danger of the former being ignored. This is evident from a report in which Abū Bakr is said to have forbidden the people to narrate too many aḥādīth.<sup>2</sup> This advice could have been given only under such circumstances when there was too much popularity of the traditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Annales, i, 1861-1885, 1919-2008, 2013-2017, 2020, 2022, 2044-2045, 2049-2054, 2086.; Tab, IV, ii, 78.; Kharāj, 84-86.; Wathā'iq, nos. 259-275, 279-302.

<sup>2</sup> Tdh, i, 2, 3.; Adwā', 29.

Abū Bakr's prohibitive order to relate too many ahādīth does not mean that he ignored it completely. On the contrary, he wished to give to the ḥadīths right place - a place next to the Qur'ān. It is reported that Abū Bakr, and after him 'Umar, used to enquire from the companions if they possessed some rulings of the Prophet concerning matters which had come for adjudication and about which the caliphs had no report from the Prophet. Sometimes, the companions used to apprise them of the ahādīth even when they were not asked to do so. This happened when a decision was given by the authorities against the Prophet's practice. The caliphs on their part were very cautious in accepting these traditions. When convinced of its veracity, they changed their decisions in the light of the reported tradition. Thus we know that Abū Bakr had asked Muḥīra b. Shu'ba to produce a witness for a ḥadīth narrated by him. It is further reported that when it was produced and the statement verified, Abū Bakr accepted the tradition and gave his decision accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

In any case, it can be maintained that Abū Bakr paid due attention to the ḥadīth. That he made a collection of 500 ahādīth (though burnt due to sincere motives) clearly shows his concern over the ḥadīth.

(6) 'Alā' b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Ammār al-Ḥadramī (d. 21 A.H.):—

'Alā' was in possession of a booklet containing laws regarding taxes on camels, cows, goats and sheep, fruit crops and hoardings.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Umm, vii, 242, 246.; Jāmi', viii, 252-253 (Farā'id).

<sup>2</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 76.; Wathā'iq, no. 56.

The document was given to him by the Prophet at the time of his appointment as a tax collector and governor of Bahrayn.<sup>1</sup>

(7) Ubayy b. Ka'b. (d. 22 A.H.):-

Ubayy knew the art of writing even before the advent of Islam.<sup>2</sup> He was the first person to write on behalf of the Prophet after the latter's migration to Medina.<sup>3</sup> He was also one of the writers of the revelations<sup>4</sup> and had acted as Prophet's secretary to write down the official letters to the rulers of the neighbouring tribes.<sup>5</sup>

Ubayy is listed among the six eminent jurists (fuqahā') acceptable to Abū Ḥanīfa and his followers.<sup>6</sup> Masrūq b. al-Ajda' (d. 63 A.H.) places him among such six reputed scholars who, in his words, 'possessed the 'ilm of all the companions'.<sup>7</sup>

As regards his ḥadīth collections, it is said that he possessed some 164 ahādīth of the Prophet.<sup>8</sup>

It was, perhaps, on account of his reputation as a scholar that the Prophet called him Sayyid al-Anṣār (leader of the Anṣār) and the caliph 'Umar had given him the title of Sayyid al-muslimīn (leader of the muslims).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tab, IV, ii, 76.; Wathā'iq, no. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Futūḥ, 459.; Ma'ārif, 88.

<sup>3</sup> Futūḥ, 458.

<sup>4</sup> Qurra', i, 31-32.; no. 1318.; ii, 27-28, no. 2616.; Tdh, i, 16.; Mashāhīr, 12, no. 31.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, I, ii, 18, 28.; Subḥ, vi, 380.; Wathā'iq, nos. 63, 64, 76.

<sup>6</sup> Papyri, ii, 80, n. 34.

<sup>7</sup> Papyri, ii, 80.; Tdh, i, 24.

<sup>8</sup> Papyri, ii, 66.; Asmā', I, i, 109.

<sup>9</sup> Ikmāl, 586. It should be noted that he used to teach ḥadīth in the mosque of Medina. cf. Tab, III, ii, 23.



(8) 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23 A.H.):-

We have already discussed 'Umar's viewpoint with respect to recording of ḥadīth in a previous chapter.<sup>1</sup> There we had seen that his ban of codification of the sunna was based on purely sincere motive, for he wanted to give the ḥadīth a secondary position next only to the Qur'ān. Ḥadīth being a burning topic in his days, he feared lest the Qur'ān be ignored and not given due importance. He therefore, forbade people to dwell too much on the ḥadīth.

But despite his prohibitory order regarding codification of the sunna he did not minimise the importance of the ḥadīth. He placed it alongside the Qur'ān. It was his practice, like his predecessor Abū Bakr<sup>2</sup>, that whenever any case came up for adjudication he looked first in the Qur'ān and decided the case in its light. But if he did not find the ruling there, he referred to the practice of the Prophet and decided the case accordingly. Failing this either, he consulted the companions and used his own considered opinion (ra'y) to give a verdict in accordance with the Qur'ān and the sunna.<sup>3</sup> It also happened, therefore, that sometimes he changed his verdict if he was informed of a Prophetic ruling contrary to his own. About this practice we find several instances. It is reported for example, that he changed one of his judgements with regard to a case of inheritance after he came to know of a ḥadīth of the Prophet. The ḥadīth in question was related to him by Daḥḥāk b. Sufyān who told him that it was sent to him in writing by the Prophet himself.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See supra, chapter III, pp. 178-179; 196-199.

<sup>2</sup> SD (Med.), i, 53-54.; Tdh, i, 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Kharāj, 81-82. Also see SD (Med.), i, 55, for 'Umar's letter to this effect to Shurayh.

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, ii, 123.; Risāla, 59.; Ikhtilāf, 19-20.; Umm, vi, 77 (Mīrāth ad-Diya).

Similarly, he is reported to have revised his decision regarding the bloodwit of the fingers after he came to know of a ruling of the Prophet contrary to his own decision.<sup>1</sup>

It is significant to note that he was extremely careful in accepting a tradition and did not take it as its face value. He sometimes demanded witnesses to prove the authenticity of a certain reported tradition. To take, for instance, when 'Amr b. Umayya ad-Damrī narrated a tradition concerning ṣadaqa, 'Umar demanded a witness to confirm that it was the Prophet's saying. Damrī thereupon took 'Umar to 'Ā'isha who testified the report.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī<sup>3</sup>, Mughīra b. Shu'ba<sup>4</sup> and Ubayy b. Ka'b<sup>5</sup> were all compelled by 'Umar to produce witnesses for the traditions they had related.

Thus we see that 'Umar gave due importance to the ḥadīth. In his correspondence with state officials, we come across numerous references of the sunna coupled in a phrase with the Qur'ān.<sup>6</sup> It shows that he did not minimise the importance of the ḥadīth but he gave it its right place. What in fact he really did was this that he took practical step in curbing the danger of competition between the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth.<sup>7</sup> This fear of the competition is well reflected in the advice he had given to his emissaries to Kufa. At

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<sup>1</sup> Ikhtilāf, 17-18.; For details see supra, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> Musnad (Ṭ), vi, 194-195.; ḥadīth no. 1364.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad (Ṭ), ii, 70.; ix, 287.; SB, iv, 170-171 (Isti'dhān).; Tah, i, 6.

<sup>4</sup> SB, iv, 325 (Diyāt).; SAD, iv, 266 (Diyāt), ḥadīth no. 4570.; Tah, i, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, IV, i, 13-14.

<sup>6</sup> As for example in his letter to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī. (cf. Wathā'iq, no. 327.; Nihāya, vi, 257.)

<sup>7</sup> Tab, III, i, 207.

the time of their departure he is reported to have said, 'You are going to the people who are busy reciting the Qur'ān... do not detain them by making them busy with the ḥadīth. Recite the Qur'ān in a pleasing way and be brief in transmitting the traditions from the Prophet...'<sup>1</sup>

As regards writing of the ḥadīth by 'Umar, it is reported that he intended and gave serious consideration to codify the sunna and consulted his colleagues in this matter.<sup>2</sup> But before some official step could be taken to implement the plan, he invoked the help of God (istikhāra) and consequently gave up the whole idea.<sup>3</sup>

The above report is mursal - one link being missing in the isnād<sup>4</sup> - and hence its authenticity is questionable. But even if we accept the report as genuine, as has been done by the group of scholars who consider mursal traditions as valid, it does not prove that 'Umar was against writing down of ḥadīth as such. What in fact he disapproved of was the official codification of the sunna. We know that the Qur'ān until his time was not standardized and its copies were not in common circulation.<sup>5</sup> Under these circumstances

<sup>1</sup> Bayān, ii, 120-121.; Tdh, i, 7.; Ṭab, VI, 2.; Fāsil, 65b.

<sup>2</sup> It is to be noted that consultation on important issues with competent scholars was a practice commonly followed by Abū Bakr and 'Umar. (cf. Umm, vii, 242, 246.; Ṭab, II, ii, 109-110.; Hujja, i, 291.)

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 64.; Taqyīd, 50.; Ṭab, III, i, 206.; 'Ilm, 4a.

<sup>4</sup> In all the isnāds (except that of Al-Firyābī - Ath-Thawrī - Ma'mar - Az-Zuhri - 'Urwa - Ibn 'Umar - 'Umar) through which the ḥadīth has been transmitted, the name 'Ibn 'Umar' is missing. (cf. Taqyīd, 49-53.; Ṭab, III, i, 206.).

<sup>5</sup> It is reported that although during 'Umar's time schools were established, where teachers used to be sent to teach the Qur'ān and the sunna (cf. Ṭab, III, i, 201, 243), the written copies of the Qur'ān were not supplied to these schools (cf. Shibli, Al-Fārūq, 371-375).

'Umar rightly felt that there was more urgency of the codification of the Qur'ān than of the sunna.<sup>1</sup> It should, however, be stressed that non-compilation of the ḥadīth was not due to alleged prophetic interdiction to write down the traditions. Had it been the case, 'Umar would not have given serious thoughts for its codification. Furthermore, the companions who were consulted by 'Umar on this matter would not have approved of his plan.<sup>2</sup>

Despite his decision not to compile the ḥadīth officially, 'Umar took keen interest in the study, propagation and even writing of the ḥadīth. He used to say, 'The best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad', and 'one who heard a tradition and reproduced it in its entirety is safe'. He is also reported to have advised: "Learn the sunna, the farā'id (laws about inheritance) and the lahn (usage of words and phrases)<sup>3</sup> alongside the Qur'ān."<sup>4</sup> We also find reports in which he is described as saying, "fetter the ilm (i.e. ḥadīth) into writing."<sup>5</sup>

In the light of these statements, the report about his

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<sup>1</sup> It should be recalled in this connection that 'Umar, who possessed an edition of the Qur'ān which preceeded the 'Uthmānic edition [cf. SB, iii, 393 (Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān); Hilya, ii, 51.], was very strict in matters of exegesis. We are told that he had punished Ṣābiḡ b. 'Īsā, a Khārijite, for raising questions about the ambiguous and difficult passages of the Qur'ān in a foolish and stubborn way. (cf. SD, i, 54-55.; Mst, ii, 82/84-85.; Papyri, ii, 108). Similarly, when he saw a copy of the Qur'ān with an accompanying verse-by-verse tafsīr, he cut out the tafsir portion and left the text only. (cf. Renaissance, 196.; Papyri, ii, 110).

<sup>2</sup> The report clearly says that the companions had agreed to 'Umar's proposal of the official codification of the sunna. (cf. Bayān, i, 64.)

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, ii, 123.

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, ii, 123.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, i, 72.; Fāsil, 36a.

imprisoning of Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī, Abū 'd-Dardā' and 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd on the charge of transmitting a large number of ahādīth<sup>1</sup> seems dubious. In fact this report can be rejected both on the basis of the isnād and the matn. It is historically true that 'Umar himself had sent 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd<sup>2</sup> and Abū 'd-Dardā',<sup>3</sup> as teachers to Kufa and Damascus respectively. How could then he imprison them for narrating the traditions. Furthermore, we find the name of Ibrāhīm in the Isnād of this report. This Ibrāhīm was born in 20/21 A.H.<sup>4</sup> in the last days of 'Umar who cannot possibly relate anything directly from 'Umar's period. Ibn Ḥazm, on this basis, justly declares that the attribution of this report to 'Umar is not right.<sup>5</sup> Jazā'irī also suspects the authenticity of this report on the basis of its isnād.<sup>6</sup>

That 'Umar was interested in the teaching of the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth is evident from the fact that he sent competent teachers to various parts of his empire not only to teach the Qur'ān but also the sunna.<sup>7</sup> Among the teachers sent to these centres may be mentioned 'Ubāda b. aṣ-Ṣāmit<sup>8</sup> and Mu'ādh b. Jabal<sup>9</sup>, who were sent

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<sup>1</sup> Tdh, i, 7.; Fāsil, 65b.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, II, ii, 114.; VI, 3.; Khifā', ii, 6.; Minhāj, iv, 142.; Asmā', I, i, 290.

<sup>3</sup> Nubalā', ii, 248.; Khifā', ii, 6.; Minhāj, iv, 142.; Asmā', I, i, 256.

<sup>4</sup> Mashāhīr, 66, no. 450.

<sup>5</sup> Ihkām, ii, 141.

<sup>6</sup> Tawjīh, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Kharāj, 16.; Tab, II, ii, 114.; III, i, 201.; Minhāj, iii, 272.; iv, 142.

<sup>8</sup> Asmā', I, i, 257.; Khifā', ii, 6.; Minhāj, iv, 142.; Istī'āb, ii, 450.

<sup>9</sup> Minhāj, iv, 142.

to Syria, 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd<sup>1</sup> and Hudhayfa b. al-Yamān<sup>2</sup>, sent to Iraq, and 'Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn<sup>3</sup> and 'Abd Allāh b. Mughaffal<sup>4</sup> sent to Basra. It is reported that the team sent to teach Basrans consisted of ten teachers.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of the fact that 'Umar gave up the idea of codifying the sunna, he quoted traditions in his official letters.<sup>6</sup> Not only this, but he possessed some written aḥādīth with him. It is reported for instance, that he collected some aḥādīth regarding ṣadaqāt in a kitāb<sup>7</sup>, which later came in possession of his son 'Abd Allāh.<sup>8</sup> It is reported that Nāfi', the freed slave of Ibn 'Umar had read the aḥādīth from this manuscript to the latter several times.<sup>9</sup>

It is also mentioned in the sources that a ṣaḥīfa containing laws regarding the zakāt schedule of camels was found attached to his sword after his death.<sup>10</sup> It was, perhaps, the same document which the Prophet had got written but before he could dispatch it to his governors, he passed away.<sup>11</sup> This kitāb was kept and used by Abū Bakr, on whose death it was passed on to 'Umar, who likewise

<sup>1</sup> Tab., II, i, 105.; VI, 3.; Khifā', ii, 6.; Minhāj, iv, 142.

<sup>2</sup> Minhāj, iv, 142.

<sup>3</sup> Nubalā', ii, 363.; Papyri, ii, 211.; Khifā', ii, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Nubalā', ii, 345.; Khifā', ii, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Nubalā', ii, 345.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad, i, 28, 36, 46, 50.; SB, iv, 82 (Libās).; SM, iii, 315-316 (Libās).; Kifāya, 480.

<sup>7</sup> Amwāl, 362, 363, 366 et passim.; Muwatta', ii, 112-114 (Zakāt).

<sup>8</sup> SAD, ii, 133 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1570.

<sup>9</sup> Amwāl, 393.

<sup>10</sup> Kifāya, 505.

<sup>11</sup> SD, i, 381.; SAD, ii, 131, ḥadīth no. 1568. (Zakāt); SIL, i, 549 (Zakāt).; Muwatta', ii, 112, n. (Zakāt). Jāmi', iii, 106-107 (Zakāt).

used it in his administration.<sup>1</sup> Later, it was preserved in his family until at least the time of 'Umar II, who is said to have made a copy of it.<sup>2</sup> Zuhri, who had memorised this manuscript, testifies its authenticity.<sup>3</sup>

As a matter of fact, 'Umar, who knew the art of writing before the advent of Islam<sup>4</sup> and had acted as a scribe of the Prophet thereafter,<sup>5</sup> made use of writing all through his life. Regarding his written collection, we find a report saying that he possessed a box (tābūt) full of treaties and pacts<sup>6</sup> which was burnt to ashes alongwith the dīwān<sup>7</sup> in 82 A.H.<sup>8</sup> This must have included at least few ḥadīth manuscripts as well.

That 'Umar might have possessed some written aḥādīth can be inferred from the report in which 'Umar II had instructed Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm to collect and send to the capital the ḥadīth of 'Umar I along with those of the Prophet.<sup>9</sup> The report suggests that some written aḥādīth did exist during 'Umar II's time. The facts that 'Umar II was looking for authentic documents of earlier times,

<sup>1</sup> SAD, ii, 131-133 (Zakāt), ḥadīth nos. 1567-1570.; SIM, i, 549-550 (Zakāt).; Muwatta', ii, 112, n. (Zakāt).

<sup>2</sup> SAD, ii, 133 (Zakāt) ḥadīth no. 1570.

<sup>3</sup> SAD, ii, 133 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1570.

<sup>4</sup> Futūh, 457.

<sup>5</sup> Imtā', i, 305.; Wathā'iq, no. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Wathā'iq, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Dīwān was an official register accessible to public. The stipends were distributed according to the list contained therein. (cf. Historical sources, 135.; Tab, III, i, 212.)

<sup>8</sup> Wathā'iq, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> SD, i, 126.; Muwatta' (Sh), 389.; Tab, II, ii, 134.; viii, 353.



especially of the period of the first two caliphs,<sup>1</sup> and that his instruction to Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm was only a part of this large scale plan, clearly shows that it was the written (not oral) ahādīth of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb that 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz had demanded from Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm. No doubt 'Umar II had also asked for unwritten practices of 'Umar I, this was in fact another commission given by him to another person, named Sālim b. 'Abd Allāh.<sup>2</sup>

(9) Abū 'd-Dardā' (d. 32/34 A.H.):—

'Uwaymir b. Zayd Abū 'd-Dardā', the leading traditionist of Syria, was an assiduous collector of ahādīth. He was one of the three companions alleged to have been detained by 'Umar for imparting the ahādīth in great number.<sup>3</sup> This allegation, as we have seen earlier, is wrong, for we see that not only did Abū 'd-Dardā' relate only 179 ahādīth<sup>4</sup>, but he was in so good books of 'Umar that he sent him as a religious teacher to Damascus.<sup>5</sup>

While on the one hand Abū 'd-Dardā' was sought out for his knowledge of ḥadīth by other companions<sup>6</sup>, on the other hand he himself was busy collecting more and more traditions. Thus we see that he received, probably on request, few ahādīth from Salmān al-Fārisī (d. 32 A.H.) in written form.<sup>7</sup> It is also reported that

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Khulafā', 161.

<sup>3</sup> Tdh, i, 7.; Nubalā', ii, 248.; Asmā', I, i, 256.; Khifā', ii, 6.; Minhāj, iv, 142.

<sup>4</sup> Jawāmi', 276-277.

<sup>5</sup> Nubalā', ii, 248.

<sup>6</sup> Bayān, i, 33.; Musnad, v, 196.; SAD, iii, 432 ('Ilm), ḥadīth no. 3641.; Jāmi', x, 154-155 ('Ilm), where it is reported that a person came to Damascus from Medina only to hear a ḥadīth from Abū 'd-Dardā'.

<sup>7</sup> Mizān, iv, 546, no. 10375.

he had made a written collection of aḥādīth, but he destroyed it for fear that they might be misused.<sup>1</sup>

Among his written collections may also be mentioned a ṣaḥīfa<sup>2</sup>, which was in circulation in Syria. It is reported that a man brought it to Ibn Mas'ūd (in Medina) for his perusal, who, after reading its contents, destroyed it.<sup>3</sup> From the report, it appears that it contained some of Abū 'd-Dardā's own views (regarding legal matters).

(10) Salmān al-Fārisī (d. 32/36 A.H.):—

Salmān al-Fārisī, also known as Salmān al-Khayr<sup>4</sup>, is said to have lived for 250 years. He had devoted himself to the study of religion even before Islam and had read numerous books on Christianity.<sup>5</sup> After his conversion to Islam, he attended to Islamic learning and studied the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth. He was highly praised for his insight and versatility by the Prophet and the companions.<sup>6</sup> Recognising his deep religious knowledge, 'Alī described him as an inexhaustible ocean (baḥr la yundhaf)<sup>7</sup>. Among the companions who transmitted the aḥādīth from Salmān were Abū Hurayra and Anas b. Mālik.<sup>8</sup>

It is not certain whether he possessed some written collection

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 117-118.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 25, 54.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Mashāḥīr, 44, no. 274.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VI, 9.; Ikmāl, 597.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, IV, i, 61.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, IV, i, 61.

<sup>8</sup> Ikmāl, 597.

of aḥādīth. We do, however, find a report saying that he had sent few traditions in written form to Abū'd-Dardā'.<sup>1</sup>

(11) Fāṭima bint Qays:-

The woman companion, Fāṭima belonged to the group of the first women emigrants (to Medina).<sup>2</sup> She was a reputed scholar of ḥadīth who not only gave lectures but also dictated the traditions to her students. One collection from her dictation was made by Abū Salama 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān (d. 94 A.H.).<sup>3</sup>

(12) Asmā' bint 'Umayy (d. 38 A.H.):

Asmā' was the wife of Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib, whom she had accompanied during the migration to Abyssina. After Ja'far's death, she was married to Abū Bakr. But later, when Abū Bakr also died, she was married to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. As she was an authority on ḥadīth, many elder companions transmitted from her.<sup>4</sup>

As regards her written collection, it is reported that she had collected many traditions of the Prophet in a kitāb.<sup>5</sup>

(13) Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī (d. 42/44/51 A.H.):

The famous governor of Basra in 'Umar's reign, Abū Mūsā is generally listed among the opponents of written aḥādīth.<sup>6</sup> He is said to have erased the writings of one of his pupils.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mizān, iv, 546, no. 10375.

<sup>2</sup> SM, ii, 682, n. (Ṭalāq).; Ikmāl, 613.

<sup>3</sup> SM, ii, 683 (Ṭalāq).; Tab, viii, 201.; Musnad, vi, 413.

<sup>4</sup> Ikmāl, 587.

<sup>5</sup> Mst, ii, 9/22.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyīd, 39-41.

<sup>7</sup> Taqyīd, 40-41.; Bayān, i, 66.; SD, i, 22.; Ilm, 11b.; Tab, IV, i, 83.; Fāṣil, 36b, 37a.

But his prejudice against written record, was, perhaps, due to his inability to write himself. It is reported that he learnt the art of writing only at a mature age.<sup>1</sup> But despite his aversion to writing he is reported to have sent some ahādīth to 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd in written form.<sup>2</sup>

(14) Zayd b. Thābit (d. 45 A.H.):-

The talented Zayd b. Thābit, the well known secretary of the Prophet, and the editor-in-chief of the 'Uthmānic edition of the Qur'ān, was an authority on the law of inheritance and other legal matters<sup>3</sup> and was an important source of the Prophet's traditions.<sup>4</sup>

As regards Zayd's linguistic capabilities, in addition to Arabic, he knew Hebrew and Syriac<sup>5</sup> and was familiar with the spoken languages of Persian, Greek, Abyssinian and Coptic<sup>6</sup> to act as the Prophet's interpreter in these languages.

Despite the fact that he used writing (Arabic) in all his public offices<sup>7</sup>, it is generally believed that he was against the permanent recording of the traditions<sup>8</sup>. This inference has been

<sup>1</sup> Tab, IV, i, 83.

<sup>2</sup> Musnad, iv, 396, 414.

<sup>3</sup> Khifā', i, 15.; Tab, II, ii, 115-117.

<sup>4</sup> I'lām (Qayyim), i, 12.; Ilm, 7a, 8a.; Tdh, i, 51-52.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, II, ii, 115.

<sup>6</sup> Papyri, ii, 258, citing Mas'ūdī's kitāb at-tanbīh wa 'l-Ishrāf (ed. M.J. de Goeje, [BGA VIII], 1894), p. 283.

<sup>7</sup> On the request of 'Umar I, for instance, he wrote his legal opinion regarding the share of grandfathers in inheritance, and handed it over to the former. (cf. Sunan Darq, 464.)

<sup>8</sup> Āthār, 212.; Jarh, I, ii, 558.; Taqyīd, 15.; Tdh, i, 29-30.

drawn from a report in which Zayd is described as citing a Prophet's ḥadīth interdicting the recording of the traditions. On the basis of this ḥadīth, adds the report, Zayd asked Marwān b. al-Ḥakam to erase the traditions which the latter had got recorded without the former's knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

But the above report does not appear to be genuine on the ground that its narrator is al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥanṭab, who never met Zayd. Furthermore, Sha'bī reports that Zayd's transmitted material was not the Prophet's ḥadīth but his own personal opinion (ra'y), as is specifically mentioned by Zayd himself. He is reported to have said, "Excuse me, O, Marwān! in fact, it is my ra'y".<sup>2</sup> As he was not aware that his narration was being recorded, he might have narrated the aḥādīth along with his own views about certain problems. This was quite possible for the simple reason that he was a faqīh<sup>3</sup> who combined the knowledge of the ḥadīth and fiqh.<sup>4</sup> When he was informed that his whole narration was recorded, he naturally asked them to destroy the manuscripts. This has been clearly indicated in another version of his statement, as reported by Sha'bī. According to this version, he asked Marwān to destroy the manuscript and said, "All that I transmitted to you may not be the same as I have narrated to you (la'alla kulla shay'in ḥaddathtukum bihī laysa kamā ḥaddathtukum)" i.e. may not be in conformity with the Prophet's aḥādīth.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taḥyīd, 35.; Bayān, i, 65.; Ṭab, II, i, 117.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, II, i, 117.; Nubalā', ii, 313.

<sup>3</sup> Āthār, 212.; Mashāhīr, 10, no. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Taḥyīd, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, i, 65.

That he was not against written ahādīth is evident from the fact that he had compiled a book - the first of its kind - on inheritance.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, his practice of allowing his students to record his ahādīth disproves the assertion that he was against written material. Kathīr b. Aflah testifies to this practice when he says, "we used to write down the traditions in the lecture of Zayd b. Thābit."<sup>2</sup>

(15) Mughīra b. Shu'ba (d. 50 A.H.):—

Mughīra is said to have dictated few ahādīth to his client and secretary, Warrād, which he sent to the caliph Mu'āwīya on the latter's request.<sup>3</sup> These traditions were four in number which have been incorporated in the Musnad of Ibn Hanbal.<sup>4</sup>

During Abū Bakr's caliphate when a case regarding blood money was brought for decision, Mughīra apprised the caliph of a ḥadīth from the Prophet on the subject.<sup>5</sup>

It was, perhaps, due to his reputation as possessor of a large number of ahādīth that Mu'āwīya had written to him to send him 'the tradition he had heard from the Prophet'. Warrād reports that when he visited Mu'āwīya later, he heard him giving orders that the traditions reported (sent) by Mughīra should be followed.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nubalā', ii, 312.; Taqyīd, 98-99, n. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 102.

<sup>3</sup> SB, i, 217 (Adhān), 375 (Zakāt).; iv, 192 (Da'awāt), 256 (Qadar), 423 (I'tisām).; SAD, ii, 110 (witr), ḥadīth no. 1505.; Ilm, 4b.; Kunā, ii, 66.; Jarḥ, I, ii, 357.; Musnad, iv, 245, 247, 249, 250, 254.; Kifāya, 482.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad, iv, 244-245.

<sup>5</sup> SAD, iv, 266 (Diyāt), ḥadīth no. 4570.

<sup>6</sup> Ma'rifat, 15.

(16) Jarīr b. 'Abd Allāh b. Jābir al-Bajalī (d. 51 A.H.):-

Jarīr is said to have narrated 100 ahādīth from the Prophet, some of which have survived in classical texts. Among the scholars who transmitted from him were Anas b. Mālik, Qays b. Abī Hāzim, Sha'bī and many others.<sup>1</sup>

As regards his written record of traditions, it is reported that he had sent few ahādīth to Mu'āwiyah in written form.<sup>2</sup>

(17) Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (d. 52 A.H.):-

Khālid b. Ziyād, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī was a great searcher after knowledge. It is reported that once he undertook a long journey from Medina to Egypt to check from 'Uqba b. 'Amir whether a certain ḥadīth<sup>3</sup> was correctly remembered by him.<sup>4</sup>

As regards his written collection, it is reported that he had sent few traditions in written form to his nephew.<sup>5</sup> In addition to this, a collection containing 112 ahādīth, ascribed to his grandson Ayyūb b. Khālid<sup>6</sup>, could also be his own compilation which might have reached Ibn Khālid after his death.

(18) Abū Bakra ath-Thaqafī (d. 53/59 A.H.):-

Nufay' b. al-Hārith, Abū Bakra was a freed slave of the Prophet.

<sup>1</sup> Asmā', I, i, 147.

<sup>2</sup> Musnad, iv, 361.

<sup>3</sup> The ḥadīth in question was the following: 'One who covers (the faults) of a muslim in this world, Allāh would cover his sins on the day of judgement.' (cf. SB, ii, 98 (Mazālim...); Ilm, 4b.) The sole possessor of this ḥadīth was the Egyptian 'Uqba b. 'Amir.

<sup>4</sup> Ma'rifat, 7-8.; Bayān, i, 93-94.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad, v, 413.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad, v, 423.



He is said to have transmitted 132 ahādīth, some of which have survived in the classical texts.<sup>1</sup>

He sent, in written form, a ḥadīth regarding dispensation of justice, to his son 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, the then governor of Sijistān.<sup>2</sup>

(19) 'Ā'isha, the Prophet's wife (d. 57/58 A.H.):-

The great woman traditionist and jurist, 'Ā'isha belonged to the group of mukaththirūn (narrators of large number of ahādīth). She is said to have narrated 2210 ahādīth from the Prophet.<sup>3</sup> A large number of scholars from amongst the companions and the successors transmitted from her.<sup>4</sup>

She was considered an authority on the Prophet's ahādīth. We have seen that 'Amr b. Umayya aḍ-Ḍamrī had approached her to testify a ḥadīth he had related before 'Umar.<sup>5</sup>

It appears that not only did she narrate ahādīth but got it written down as well. Mu'āwiya, for instance, is reported to have received some ahādīth from her in written form.<sup>6</sup> It is not certain whether she wrote these down herself or got it written. Perhaps the latter was the case. Among her pupils who made written collections from her was her nephew, 'Urwa b. az-Zubayr.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 198.

<sup>2</sup> SB, iv, 388 (Aḥkām).; SAD, iii, 411 (Aqḍiya), ḥadīth no. 3589.

<sup>3</sup> Ikmāl, 612.; Mughīth, 379.

<sup>4</sup> Ikmāl, 612.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad (Ṭ), vi, 194-195, ḥadīth no. 1364.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad, vi, 87.; Fāsil, 49b.

<sup>7</sup> Kifāya, 489.

(20) Shaddād b. Aws (d. 58 A.H.):-

The nephew of Ḥassān b. Thābit, Shaddād was an authority on the ḥadīth in Jerusalem. He is said to have dictated few ahādīth to two of his fellow companions on their way to pilgrimage.<sup>1</sup>

(21) Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān (d. 60/61 A.H.):-

Despite denial in certain circles of the literary and cultural achievements of the Umayyads, we find reports indicating that not only serious minded students of this period but even the rulers - in addition to the pious Umar II, who was undisputedly a religious scholar - played some part in the development of religious sciences, particularly the ḥadīth. Beginning with Mu'āwiya, the founder of the dynasty, almost all succeeding caliphs and governors, like Marwān b. al-Ḥakam<sup>2</sup>, 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān<sup>3</sup>, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān<sup>4</sup>, and Hishām<sup>5</sup> have shown interest in the study and preservation of the ḥadīth. It is no wonder, therefore, that some of these rulers have been listed among the traditionists.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nubalā', ii, 333.

<sup>2</sup> He took recourse to trickery in order to get the ahādīth written down from Zayd b. Thābit and Abū Hurayra. (cf. Isāba, iv, 205, no. 1190.; Kunā, 33.; Tab, II, i, 117.; Taqyid, 35, 41.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 81-82.; Bayān, i, 65.; ii, 143-144.; Nubalā', ii, 431-432.)

<sup>3</sup> He memorised and transmitted few traditions. (cf. Tab, V, 167, 174.; Papyri, i, 16.)

<sup>4</sup> He is listed among the traditionists. He possessed Abū Hurayra's ahādīth in written form and had asked the Syrian traditionist Kathīr b. Murra to collect and send others' ahādīth to him. (cf. Tab, VII, ii, 157.)

<sup>5</sup> He induced 'Zuhri, the eminent traditionist, to commit the ahādīth into writing and to dictate few for his sons. (cf. Bayān, i, 76-77.; Hilya, iii, 361.)

<sup>6</sup> Tab, VII, ii, 128.; Jarḥ, IV, i, 377.; Isāba, iii, 434, no. 8068.; Isti'āb, iii, 400-401, for Mu'āwiya being listed among the Syrian traditionists; Jarḥ, II, i, 130-131.; Tdh, i, 83, for Sulaymān as a traditionist; and Tab, V, 175.; Jarḥ, II, ii, 393, for 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān as a traditionist.

As regards Mu'āwīya, with whom we are concerned at the moment, he not only had sustained interest in history, genealogy and poetry,<sup>1</sup> but was equally interested in the ḥadīth. Just as he had found great pleasure in listening to interesting anecdotes of the past from his evening companion, 'Ubayd b. Sharyā<sup>2</sup>, he was delighted to hold ḥadīth sessions with the ḥadīth scholar, Abū Hurayra.<sup>3</sup>

Mu'āwīya's interest in the ḥadīth is depicted in his occasional use of it in his letters<sup>4</sup>, in his speeches<sup>5</sup>, and in court gatherings.<sup>6</sup> He was so keen in learning the ḥadīth that he had asked others to send it to him in writing. He had written, for example, to Mughīra b. Shu'ba, his governor of Kufa, to send him the traditions he had heard from the Prophet. Mughīra is reported to have dictated few traditions to his secretary Warrād and sent them to Mu'āwīya.<sup>7</sup> He had also asked Zayd b. Thābit to narrate the ahādīth and when the latter complied, the caliph got them written without Zayd's knowledge. But the collection thus prepared was later destroyed on Zayd's request.<sup>8</sup> He had also written to 'Ā'isha several times

<sup>1</sup> Udabā', i, 29-30. Muḥabbar, 478.; Papyri, i, 14-15.; Ma'ārif, 181

<sup>2</sup> 'Ubayd's narration was later collected into a book on Mu'āwīya's order. This book, known as Akhbār 'Ubayd, though subject of much controversy, has been published (Printed with at-Tījān, pp.311-488.) [cf. Papyri, i, 9-19, 56.]

<sup>3</sup> Imlā', 57-58.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad, iv, 94.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad, iv, 91-102, passim.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad, iv, 91-102, passim.

<sup>7</sup> Kifāya, 482.; Kunā, ii, 66.; Jarḥ, I, ii, 357.; Musnad, iv, 245, 247, 249, 250, 254.; SB, i, 217 (Adhān), 375 (Zakāt).; iv, 192 (Da'awāt), 256 (Qadar), 423 (I'tisām).; SN, iii, 70-71 (Sahw).; SnD, ii, 110 (witr), ḥadīth no. 1505.; SL, iii, 121 (Adīya).

<sup>8</sup> Bayān, i, 63.

for the ahādīth and the latter had complied with his request.<sup>1</sup>

As regards his own collection of ḥadīth, it is reported that he possessed a collection containing 160 traditions.<sup>2</sup> This collection has been preserved in the Musnad of Ibn Ḥanbal.<sup>3</sup>

(22) Masrūq b. al-Ajda' (d. 63 A.H.):—

The judge and traditionist, Masrūq b. al-Ajda' was an insatiable collector of the ḥadīth, in search of which he travelled from one province to another.<sup>4</sup> Sha'bī gives an account of his riḥla (journey) from Iraq to Syria.<sup>5</sup> The importance of his journeys lies in the fact that he had not merely heard the traditions from the teachers during these riḥlāt but had also written them down.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from making journeys in search of ḥadīth, he sometimes acquired the traditions through correspondance. It is reported, for instance, that once Masrūq and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Utba wrote to Subay'a al-Aslamīyya asking for a tradition regarding 'idda. The latter is said to have complied with their request by sending, in written form, the Prophet's instructions with regard to this legal issue.<sup>7</sup> To quote another example, Masrūq once asked 'Alqama

<sup>1</sup> Musnad, vi, 87.; Fāsil, 49b.

<sup>2</sup> Panyri, ii, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad, iv, 91-102.

<sup>4</sup> Hilya, ii, 95.; Bayān, i, 94. He had travelled so much in search of the ḥadīth that he came to be known as Abū's-safar (the father of journey). cf. Tahdh, x, 110.

<sup>5</sup> Hilya, ii, 95.; Ilm, 4b.; Fāsil, 14b.

<sup>6</sup> Bayān, i, 66.; Tacyīd, 39.; Jarḥ, IV, i, 396-397.; Tab, VI, 50-56.; Panyri, ii, 11.

<sup>7</sup> SIM, i, 625-626 (Talāq).; Kifāya, 481.

to write down for him certain precedents (an-nazā'ir) of the Prophet. The latter, an opponent of written ḥadīth, said, "Are you not aware that writing is disapproved." Masrūq replied, "(in that case) I shall wipe it out after I have memorised it".<sup>1</sup> This report has led some scholars to believe that Masrūq was among those who wrote the traditions for temporary use i.e. for memorising only.<sup>2</sup> But this supposition is untenable on the following grounds:

Although the report shows Masrūq's readiness to wipe out the written text, it does not mention the actual wiping by him. He might or might not have destroyed the text given to him. Furthermore, his statement, 'write for me' gives no positive clue to interpret the phrase in the sense of temporary recording. On the contrary it suggests that Masrūq himself used to keep the ahādīth in written form as a rule, hence his request for a written text from others as well. Again, 'Alqama's comment, 'Do you not know that writing is disapproved' also shows that Masrūq belonged to the group of scholars which approved of writing. It seems that his promise to wipe the written text after reading, was to make reluctant 'Alqama write for him. Moreover, if we take the statement of Masrūq literally, believing that he did intend to wipe out the text afterwards, it would simply mean that he resorted to do so only in exceptional circumstances like this. Otherwise, in normal circumstances, he used to preserve the traditions in written form.

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<sup>1</sup> Bayān, i, 66.; Taqyīd, 58-59.

<sup>2</sup> Taqyīd, 58.

(23) Nu'mān b. Bashīr (d. 64 A.H.):-

Nu'mān served as a judge in Damascus and was appointed governor of Hims by Ibn az-Zubayr.<sup>1</sup>

As regards his written ahādīth, it is reported that he wrote down few traditions in a letter and sent them to Qays b. al-Haytham.<sup>2</sup> His son, Yazīd also received some written ahādīth from him through the latter's scribe named Ḥabīb b. Sālīm.<sup>3</sup>

(24) Daḥḥāk b. Qays b. Khālīd (d. 65 A.H.):-

Among Daḥḥāk's written collection of ahādīth were few traditions which he sent in a letter to Qays b. al-Haytham.<sup>4</sup>

(25) Marwān b. al-Ḥakam (d. 65 A.H.):-

Marwān possessed an authentic collection of the ahādīth narrated by Abū Hurayra.<sup>5</sup> These traditions as we have seen earlier,<sup>6</sup> were obtained through trickery.<sup>7</sup> It is reported that the caliph not only manoeuvred to obtain these ahādīth without Abū Hurayra's knowledge<sup>8</sup> but also got it collated through the latter's narration the next year.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mashāhīr, 51, no. 332.

<sup>2</sup> Musnad, iv, 277.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad, iv, 273.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad, iii, 453.; Uṣd, iii, 37.; Isāba, ii, 207, no. 4169.

<sup>5</sup> Tagyīd, 41.; Nubalā', ii, 431-432.

<sup>6</sup> See Supra, p. 364, n. 1.

<sup>7</sup> He had to take recourse to trickery because of Abū Hurayra's unwillingness, in his earlier life, to dictate ahādīth. It is to be noted that Abū Hurayra gave up the prejudice against writing in his later life.

<sup>8</sup> Tagyīd, 41.; Nubalā', ii, 431-432.

<sup>9</sup> Nubalā', ii, 431-432.; Isāba, iv, 205, no. 1190.

In addition to this, Marwān had got written few ahādīth transmitted by Zayd b. Thābit<sup>1</sup>, though according to some reports, these were later effaced on the latter's request.<sup>2</sup>

(26) Zayd b. Arqam (d. 65/66 A.H.):-

Zayd was one of those scholars who approved of the mukātaba method of ḥadīth transmission. Thus it is reported that he sent few ahādīth in written form to Anas b. Mālik.<sup>3</sup>

(27) Jābir b. Samura (d. 66 A.H.):-

Jābir is credited with 146 traditions of the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> Some of these ahādīth have survived in major ḥadīth collections.<sup>5</sup>

He had sent one tradition, in written form, to 'Āmir b. Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ on the latter's request.<sup>6</sup>

(28) Barā'b. 'Āzib (d. 71/72 A.H.):-

This zealot companion had volunteered himself to take part in the battle of Badr but his offer was rejected by the Prophet due to his tender age.<sup>7</sup> Later, he took part in fifteen battles, including the battle of Uhud.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 20.; Bayān, i, 65.; ii, 143-144.; Tab, II, ii, 117.; SD, i, 122-123.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 65.; ii, 143-144.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, iii, 394.

<sup>4</sup> Asmā', I, i, 142.; Papyri, ii, 66, where Abbott erroneously gives the figure as 164.

<sup>5</sup> Asmā', I, i, 142.

<sup>6</sup> SM, iv, 65-66 (Fadā'il).

<sup>7</sup> Mashāhīr, 44, no. 272.; Asmā', I, i, 132.

<sup>8</sup> Asmā', I, i, 132.



As regards his interest in the ḥadīth, it is reported that he used to dictate the Prophet's traditions to his students.<sup>1</sup> Ḥākim an-Naysābūrī during his visit to Kufa in 345 A.H. had seen the remains of the place (Uṣṭuwāna) where Barā' used to hold his ḥadīth classes.<sup>2</sup>

(29) 'Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr (d. 73 A.H.)::-

One of the four 'Abādila<sup>3</sup> (the four illustrious companions whose names begin with 'Abd Allāh), 'Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr is credited with 33 ahādīth of the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> Of these, some have survived in major ḥadīth collections.<sup>5</sup> A host of traditionists, including his brother 'Urwa, transmit from him.

As regards his written ahādīth, it is reported that he wrote few legal ahādīth and sent them to 'Abd Allāh b. 'Utba b. Mas'ūd (d. 74 A.H.).<sup>6</sup>

(30) 'Abd Allāh b. 'Utba b. Mas'ūd (d. 74 A.H.)::-

'Abd Allāh b. 'Utba, a distinguished scholar of ḥadīth and fiqh, possessed a large number of traditions.<sup>7</sup> He transmitted the traditions not only from the Prophet but also from such eminent companions as Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Umar, 'Ammār and Abū Hurayra.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ilm, 11b.; SD, i, 128.; Taqyīd, 105.; Bayān, i, 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ma'rifat, 191-192.

<sup>3</sup> The other three are: 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās. (cf. Asmā', I, i, 267.)

<sup>4</sup> Asmā', I, i, 267.

<sup>5</sup> Asmā', I, i, 267.

<sup>6</sup> Musnad, iv, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, v, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, v, 311.

Among his written collection of ahādīth was a tradition sent to him by 'Umar b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Arqam, who had obtained it from Subay'a al-Aslamīyya (d. 10 A.H.).<sup>1</sup> The ḥadīth dealt with the question of 'idda (the period of waiting for a widow or a divorced woman). According to another report, Subay'a herself sent this ḥadīth to 'Abd Allāh b. 'Utba on the latter's request.<sup>2</sup>

He also possessed some legal ahādīth, sent to him in written form, by 'Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr.<sup>3</sup>

(31) Rāfi' b. Khadīj (d. 74 A.H.):-

Rāfi', the freed slave of the Prophet, had obtained an express permission from the latter to write down his sayings.<sup>4</sup> Although the sources mention that such a permission was readily given to him by the Prophet, it is not stated whether he made any ḥadīth collection thereafter. Most probably he did, for we find a report in which he tells Marwān that a certain ḥadīth regarding sacredness of Medina is written with him on a khawalānī (yemenite) skin.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps this particular tradition was one of the many that he had committed to writing and kept preserved with him.

(32) Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (d. 74 A.H.):-

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī is the main narrator of the report in which the Prophet is said to have forbidden the writing down of

<sup>1</sup> SB, iii, 62-63 (Maghāzī), 478 (Talāq).; SM, ii, 687-688 (Talāq).; Kifāya, 481.; Tahdh, viii, 75.

<sup>2</sup> SIM, i, 625-626 (Talāq).; Kifāya, 481.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad, iv, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 72-73.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad, iv, 141.; Taqyīd, 72.

the ḥadīth.<sup>1</sup> Although he had disallowed his students to make a written record of his transmission<sup>2</sup>, yet he himself appears to have written few ahādīth. This is evident from his own statement in which he declares, "We wrote nothing save that of the Qur'ān and the tashahhud (formula to be recited in prayers)."<sup>3</sup> In view of the fact that the tashahhud is a ḥadīth - found in the classical texts - we can safely say that Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī wrote down at least few ahādīth.

(33) ‘Amr b. Maḥmūd al-Awdī (d. 74/75 A.H.):-

This Kufic scholar transmitted traditions from ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, ‘Umar and others.<sup>4</sup> He was particularly interested in the historical ahādīth.

The main written record of ‘Amr is his work dealing with the assassination of ‘Umar I and the appointment of the elective council.<sup>5</sup> It is said that Ibn Ishāq, in his Sīra, drew extensively on this work without mentioning the author or his book.<sup>6</sup>

Some of the ahādīth transmitted by ‘Amr have been preserved in classical ḥadīth collections.<sup>7</sup>

(34) Wāthila b. al-Asqa’ (d. 83 A.H.):-

Wāthila b. al-Asqa’, a Basran scholar, was one of the earliest

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<sup>1</sup> Ṭaqyīd, 29-33.; Masāhif, 4.; SM, iv, 356 (Zuhd).

<sup>2</sup> Ṭaqyīd, 36-38.; ‘Ilm, 8b.; Fāsil, 36a.

<sup>3</sup> Ṭaqyīd, 93.

<sup>4</sup> Hilya, iv, 150.; Ṭab, VI, 80.

<sup>5</sup> Papyri, i, 25, 98.

<sup>6</sup> Papyri, i, 25, 90, n. 2, 98.; ii, 11-12.

<sup>7</sup> Tdh, i, 61.; Asmā’, I, ii, 34-35.

traditionists who employed dictation for imparting the ḥadīth.<sup>1</sup>  
 He died at an advanced age of 105 years.<sup>2</sup>

As regards his own collection of aḥādīth, we do not know. But it has been clearly mentioned in the sources that he used to hold classes and dictate the traditions to his students.<sup>3</sup> This practice must have resulted in the compilation of few ḥadīth books.

(35) Dahhāk b. Sufyān:-

Dahhāk was an advocate of ḥadīth writing. He used to say, 'whenever I heard something (tradition), I wrote it down; (in case of non-availability of writing material), I even wrote on the wall'.<sup>4</sup>

He is said to have received a ḥadīth in written form from the Prophet. This has been incidentally stated by himself during Umar's reign. When the caliph gave a judgement, saying that there was no share for a woman in the blood-wit of her deceased husband, Dahhāk dissented with him and told the caliph that he possessed a written ḥadīth, sent to him by the Prophet, according to which the widow was also entitled to a share.<sup>5</sup> 'Thereupon', remarks Shāfi'ī, 'Umar revised his judgement in accordance with the tradition.'<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Imlā', 13.; Mizān, iv, 145, no. 8658.

<sup>2</sup> Mashāhīr, 51., no. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Mizān, iv, 145, no. 8658.; Nubalā', iii, 259.; Imlā', 13.

<sup>4</sup> Bayān, i, 72.

<sup>5</sup> Asmā', i, 250.; Wathā'iq, no. 228.; Ikhtilāf, 19-20.; SAD, iii, 178 (Farā'id), ḥadīth no. 2927.; SIM, ii, 142 (Diyāt).; Muwatta', iv, 194-195 (Uqūl).

<sup>6</sup> Risāla, 59.; Ikhtilāf, 19-20.; Umm, vi, 77 (Mīrāth ad-Diya).

(36) ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Awfā (d. 86 A.H.):-

Ibn Abī Awfā was the last of the companions who died at Kufa.<sup>1</sup> He not only approved of writing the ḥadīth but had employed the mukātaba method to transmit it to others. Thus it is reported that he had sent some written ahādīth regarding the law of war to ‘Umar b. ‘Ubayd Allāh<sup>2</sup>. The latter's scribe and secretary reports that he received and read out these ahādīth to ‘Umar while they had come out to fight against the Harurites (Harūriyya).<sup>3</sup>

Ismā‘īl b. Abī Khālīd was another scholar who had received the traditions from Ibn Abī Awfā in written form.<sup>4</sup>

(37) Sahl b. Sa‘d b. Mālik (d. 88/91 A.H.):-

Sahl was the last of the companions who died in Medina.<sup>5</sup> While many scholars, including the famous Zuhri, transmitted from him, some made written collection of his transmission.<sup>6</sup> One such collection was prepared by Salama b. Dīnār, whose son, Ibn Abī Ḥāzim transmitted from this manuscript.<sup>7</sup>

(38) Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110/114 A.H.):-

Wahb, the brother of well known Hammām, was particularly interested in the biographies of the prophets and other spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Asmā’, i, 261.; Ma‘ārif, 116.

<sup>2</sup> Kifāya, 481.; SB, ii, 206, 210, 239-240 (Jihād); iv, 410 (Tamannī).

<sup>3</sup> SB, ii, 239-240 (Jihād).

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, v, 151.

<sup>5</sup> Mashāhīr, 25, no. 114.; Ma‘ārif, 116.

<sup>6</sup> Jarḥ, II, i, 198.; Annales, ii, 855.; Istī‘āb, ii, 95-96.; Isāba, ii, 88, nq. 3533.

<sup>7</sup> Jarḥ, II, ii, 382.; Tahdh, vi, 333.

leaders, as appears from the titles of his books.<sup>1</sup> Wahb drew freely on old Testament and Israelite tales<sup>2</sup> but he was acknowledged as 'reliable' (ittafaqu 'alā tawthīhi)<sup>3</sup>.

He was famed for his vast study of non-Islamic literature.<sup>4</sup> It is reported, on his own authority, that he had read more than seventy books revealed to various prophets.<sup>5</sup> It is said that these books were readily accessible in places of worship or by purchase.<sup>6</sup> Although the number of books stated here seems an exaggeration, it nevertheless shows that Wahb was a scholar and a great lover of books. A corroborative proof for this is found in the report saying that his brother used to buy books for him.<sup>7</sup>

As regards his interest in the ḥadīth, it is reported that he heard traditions from such eminent companions as Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Ās, Abū Hurayra, Anas b. Mālik and others. In his own turn, he transmitted to 'Amr b. Dīnār, Muḥīra b. Ḥakīm and many more.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from his oral transmission, he is said to have made a

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<sup>1</sup> He is credited with the following books: K.al-Qadar (cf. Mizān, iv, 353, no. 9433.), Qisas al-Anbiyā' (cf. Zunūn, ii, 1328), Qisas al-Akhyār (cf. Zunūn, ii, 1328.), K.al-Mubtadā (cf. Bagh, i, 416.; GAL(S) i, 101.; Papyri, i, 26, 45, 87, 88.), Tijān (cf. Papyri, i, 36.), and K. al-Maghāzī (cf. Zunūn, ii, 1746-1747.)

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, i, 36, 45, 59.

<sup>3</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 149.

<sup>4</sup> Ma'ārīf, 158.; Asmā', I, ii, 149.

<sup>5</sup> Mizān, iv, 353.; Tab, V, 395, where the number of books given is 92.

<sup>6</sup> Tab, V, 395-396.

<sup>7</sup> Tahdh, xi, 67.

<sup>8</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 149.

written collection of ahādīth which consisted of 27 folios.<sup>1</sup>

(39) Nāfi', the freed slave of Ibn'Umar (d. 117 A.H.):—

Nāfi' was a great scholar of ḥadīth and sunna. The traditionists agree on his trustworthiness.<sup>2</sup> He was one of the three links in the golden chain (silsilat adh-dhahab) of 'Mālik - Nāfi' - Ibn'Umar'. Regarding the authenticity of the traditions transmitted by him, Mālik says, "when I hear a tradition from Nāfi', I care little if I hear it (for confirmation) from others".<sup>3</sup> In Ibn'Uyayna's words, "which ḥadīth other than the one transmitted by Nāfi' can be more trustworthy!"<sup>4</sup>

On account of his reputation in the field of religious studies he was sent by 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz to Egypt to teach its people the sunan<sup>5</sup>.

He was a protagonist of written ḥadīth, who wrote down a large collection from Ibn'Umar<sup>6</sup> whom he had served for more than thirty years.<sup>7</sup> As regards the writings of his own pupils, he used to dictate to them<sup>8</sup> and asked them to bring their scripts for correction and collation<sup>9</sup>, and demanded from them to read the manuscript to

<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 57, n. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 124.; Tahdh, x, 412-415.

<sup>3</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 124.

<sup>4</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 124.

<sup>5</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 124.; Tdh, i, 94.

<sup>6</sup> Bagh, x, 406.; Tārīkh al-Islām, v, 11.; Ṣaḥīfa, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Tdh, i, 94.

<sup>8</sup> Ilm, 4b.; Faṣīl, 76a.; Imlā', 13.; SD (Med.), i, 106.

<sup>9</sup> Imlā', 78.



him before they transmit it to their own students.<sup>1</sup> He also employed the mukātaba method of transmission whereby scholars received the traditions from him in written form.<sup>2</sup> 'Abd Allāh b. 'Awn al-Baṣrī (d. 151 A.H.), for instance, obtained few written ahādīth in this way.<sup>3</sup>

Among the written collection of the ahādīth transmitted by him was a nuskha<sup>4</sup> in possession of his student, 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar.<sup>5</sup> Ibn Jurayj of Mecca also possessed a saddle bag (ḥaḡība) full of written ahādīth of Nāfi'.<sup>6</sup> Among the pupils who derived traditions from him in written form may also be mentioned Ayyūb as-Sikhtiyānī<sup>7</sup>, Khālīd b. Ziyād<sup>8</sup>, Layth b. Sa'd<sup>9</sup>, Mālīk b. Anas<sup>10</sup>, Muḥammad b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān<sup>11</sup>, Mūsā b. 'Uqba<sup>12</sup> and Shu'ayb b. Abī Ḥamza.<sup>13</sup>

(c) Other written records of the Successors and early scholars:-

Having dealt with the ṣaḥīfa, kitāb, etc. of both the Companions and the Successors<sup>14</sup>, and also the other written records

<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 385, 407.

<sup>2</sup> Musnad, ii, 31-32.; SB, ii, 123 ('Itq).

<sup>3</sup> Ashrāf, i, 342.; Amwāl, 119.; SB, ii, 123 ('Itq).

<sup>4</sup> Also mentioned as 'ṣaḥīfa'. (cf. Mashāḥīr, 190, no. 1524.)

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 321, 389.; Mashāḥīr, 190, no. 1524. The collection has survived to this day. It is preserved in Az-Zāhiriyya Library, Damascus, bearing the accession no. 'Majmū'', 105, folio 135 to 149'.

<sup>6</sup> Kifāya, 434.; Bagh, x, 406.

<sup>7</sup> Kifāya, 488.; Fāsil, 48b.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, iii, 90.

<sup>9</sup> Kifāya, 407.

<sup>10</sup> Mashāḥīr, 190, no. 1524.

<sup>11</sup> Tahdh, ix, 300.

<sup>12</sup> Bagh, vi, 223.

<sup>13</sup> Kifāya, 321.

<sup>14</sup> See supra, pp. 348-420.

of the Companions exclusively,<sup>1</sup> we now turn to other written records of the Successors and early scholars. In this section we shall discuss the written records of the scholars of the pre-Abbasid period only. The writings of the post-Abbasid period are quite well known and do not fall under the scope of this study.

The chronological order of the scholars discussed here is, again, according to the dates of their deaths.

(1) Hārith b. 'Abd Allāh al-A'war (d. 65 A.H.):—

Hārith b. al-A'war is credited with many books.<sup>2</sup> As regards his written collection of the traditions, it is reported that he possessed a collection of the aḥādīth from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib<sup>3</sup>, in whose company he remained for quite some time.<sup>4</sup> It is said that these traditions were given to him by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib in written form. The document containing these traditions seems to be fairly large, for it is mentioned that 'Alī wrote for him 'much knowledge' (ilman kathīran).<sup>5</sup>

Being an advocate of writing he dictated the traditions to his students. Thus 'Abd al-A'lā<sup>6</sup> and Abū Ishāq As-Sibā'ī<sup>7</sup> made written collection from him.

<sup>1</sup> See supra, pp. 441-455.

<sup>2</sup> Jarḥ, I, ii, 78.

<sup>3</sup> Ṭab, VI, 116.; Taqyīd, 90.; Ṣaḥīfa, 32.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 423.

<sup>4</sup> Ikmāl, 591.

<sup>5</sup> Ṭab, VI, 116.; Taqyīd, 90.; Ṣaḥīfa, 32.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 423.

<sup>6</sup> Jarḥ III, i, 26.

<sup>7</sup> Mizān, i, 435, no. 1627.; Tahdh, viii, 65.

(2) Sulaym b. Ḥays al-Hilālī:-

Sulaym was one of the Companions of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. He is said to have collected some traditions in a book<sup>1</sup>, which he passed on to Abān b. 'Ayyāsh. Abān is the only transmitter from this manuscript.

Ibn an-Nadīm gives an interesting account as how Sulaym, during Umayyad persecution, took refuge in Abān's house and how, to repay the latter's hospitality, he gave this kitāb to his saviour at his death-bed.<sup>2</sup>

The book of Sulaym is still preserved in the library of Sayyid Naṣīr Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī, the Shi'ite imām at Lucknow in India.<sup>3</sup>

(3) Yahyā b. al-Jazzār al-'Urani:-

Yahyā was the pupil of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib who transmitted a number of traditions from him.<sup>4</sup> His own transmissions were recorded in black and white by Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba.<sup>5</sup>

(4) 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 79 A.H.):-

He used to write down the traditions transmitted by his father without the latter's knowledge. It is reported that once when his father came to know about this practice, he asked for the written material and erased it.<sup>6</sup> According to another report, these

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<sup>1</sup> Mst, ii, 11/24.; Fihrist, 307-308.

<sup>2</sup> Fihrist, 307-308, under the title 'The Shi'ite jurists, traditionists and scholars'.

<sup>3</sup> Manār, x, 10, pp. 750-751.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, xi, 191.

<sup>5</sup> Bagh, vii, 348.; Tahdh, ii, 305.

<sup>6</sup> Taqyid, 39.

traditions were preserved by him in a sahīfa.<sup>1</sup>

(5) 'Abd ar-Rahmān b. 'Ā'idh:-

'Abd ar-Rahmān was a distinguished Syrian scholar who possessed a number of books that were much respected by the people of Hims.<sup>2</sup> It appears that he used to dictate the traditions to his students. During Hishām's reign when he visited Iraq, many students from Kufa and Basra wrote down the traditions from him.<sup>3</sup>

(6) Sa'id b. Fayrūz at-Tā'i (d. 83 A.H.):-

Sa'id b. Fayrūz at-Tā'i, also known as Abū 'l-Bakhtari, was recognised as trustworthy traditionist.<sup>4</sup> He transmitted the traditions from Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Abū Sa'id al-Khudri, and others.<sup>5</sup>

He is said to have possessed few ahādīth in written form.<sup>6</sup>

(7) Mu'adha bint 'Abd Allāh (d. 83 A.H.):-

Mu'adha bint 'Abd Allāh al-'Adawiyya had transmitted the traditions from 'Ā'isha and 'Alī etc. From her transmitted Abū Qilāba, Qatāda, Yazīd ar-Rashk and others.<sup>7</sup>

Some of her transmitted material was written down by her

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<sup>1</sup> Tagyid, 39.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, vi, 204.

<sup>3</sup> Mashāhīr, 113, no. 867.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, iv, 73.

<sup>5</sup> Hilya, vi, 381.; Tahdh, iv, 72.

<sup>6</sup> Amwāl, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Tahdh, xii, 452.

students. One such collection is said to have been preserved by Yazīd ar-Rashk, a copy of which was made by Shu'ba when the latter called at Yazīd's house.<sup>1</sup>

(8) Muḥayth b. Sumayy al-Awzā'ī:-

This successor scholar is said to have met nearly one thousand companions.<sup>2</sup> He had narrated the traditions from 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Hurayra and others.<sup>3</sup>

He is said to have preserved his traditions in several books (kāna sāhib al-kutub).<sup>4</sup>

(9) 'Abd Allāh b. Rabāḥ al-Anṣārī (d. c 90 A.H.):-

'Abd Allāh b. Rabāḥ was a trustworthy transmitter<sup>5</sup> who transmitted from Ubayy b. Ka'b, 'Ammār b. Yāsir, Abū Hurayra and others. From him transmitted Thābit al-Bunānī, 'Āsim al-Aḥwal and Abū 'Imrān etc.<sup>6</sup>

Although we do not know about his unit collections of aḥādīth, it is reported that 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb al-Azdī<sup>7</sup> and Abū 'Imrān<sup>8</sup> had written down the traditions related by him.

<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 340.

<sup>2</sup> Mashāhīr, 114, no. 869.; Tahdh, x, 255.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, x, 255.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, x, 255.

<sup>5</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 154.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, v, 207.

<sup>7</sup> Tahdh, vi, 389.

<sup>8</sup> SM, iv, 219-220 ('Ilm).; Musnad, ii, 192.

(10) Jābir b. Zayd al-Azdī (d. 93 A.H.):-

Jābir b. Zayd was a jurist<sup>1</sup> who had combined the knowledge of the fiqh and the ḥadīth. Although he approved of the written collection of ḥadīth, he disliked that his considered juristic opinion (ra'y) be recorded.<sup>2</sup> He himself was seen writing down the ahādīth on tablets (alwāh) in the lecture of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Sābit<sup>3</sup>. In turn, his own students wrote from him.<sup>4</sup>

(11) 'Urwa b. az-Zubayr (d. 94 A.H.):-

One of the seven jurists of Medina<sup>5</sup>, 'Urwa b. az-Zubayr was an authority on ḥadīth, fiqh and maghāzī. He possessed a large number of ahādīth (kathīr al-ḥadīth)<sup>6</sup>, most of which had been received by him from his maternal aunt 'Ā'isha<sup>7</sup>. It is reported that he made a written collection of 'Ā'isha's ahādīth<sup>8</sup>, but unfortunately it was destroyed during the civil strife of Ḥarra in the year 63 A.H.<sup>9</sup> It is also reported that 'Urwa himself burnt these books, for which he much regretted in later life. He used to say, "would! I had sacrificed my family and all my property in place of these books".<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 20.; Ṭab, VII, i, 131-132.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, ii, 31.; Ṭab, VII, i, 131.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 72.; Taqyīd, 109.

<sup>4</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 131.

<sup>5</sup> Asmā', I, i, 331.; Mashāḥīr, 64, no. 428.; Ikmāl, 611.

<sup>6</sup> Asmā', I, i, 332.; Ṭab, V, 130.

<sup>7</sup> Asmā', I, i, 332.; Ikmāl, 611.

<sup>8</sup> Ṣaḥīfa, 27.; Kifāya (Hyd.), 205.

<sup>9</sup> Tahdh, vii, 183.; Ṭab, V, 133.; "Earliest Biographies...", IC, i, 547-548.

<sup>10</sup> Ṭab, V, 133.; Tahdh, vii, 183.; Ṣaḥīfa, 27.; Papyri, i, 17.; "Earliest Biographies..." IC, i, 547-548.; Bayān, i, 75.; Taqyīd, 60.

The sources do not indicate the reason why 'Urwa burnt these books. Perhaps, he feared lest these religious books be misused during civil wars. This we can gather from his indifferent attitude towards political disturbances of his time. He seems to have deliberately avoided public life and politics so as to devote himself to reading and writing.

'Urwa was seriously interested in preserving and transmitting the traditions.<sup>1</sup> Thus not only did he himself write them down but also dictated them to his students.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he instructed his pupils to revise the written material after writing. This instruction was at least given by him to his pupil and son, Hishām<sup>3</sup>. Hishām reports that his father used to ask him, "Have you written down?" whereupon he replied in the affirmative. Then he used to enquire further, "Have you revised it after writing?" On this question, if he answered "no", his father used to comment, "(It means) you have not written"<sup>4</sup>, meaning that no writing is credible without being revised.

In addition to the ḥadīth, 'Urwa was interested in the fiqh. Thus we read that he was in correspondance with 'Umar II regarding a question about the bases of jurisprudence.<sup>5</sup> That he was an authority on law and jurisprudence is evident from the fact that he was one of the seven reputed jurists of Medina.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ilm, 3b.

<sup>2</sup> Kifāya, 460.; Imlā', 78.

<sup>3</sup> Imlā', 79.

<sup>4</sup> Kifāya, 350.; Fāsil, 64a, 64b.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, ii, 24.



Apart from ḥadīth and fiqh, 'Urwa was also a scholar of maḡhāzī. He collected materials for the biography of the Prophet<sup>1</sup> and composed a book on this subject.<sup>2</sup> He was consulted by the caliph 'Abd al-Malik when the latter needed some information regarding maḡhāzī of the Prophet.<sup>3</sup> Some of 'Urwa's letters in response to 'Abd al-Malik's request have been preserved in Ṭabarī's Annales.<sup>4</sup>

(12) Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 93/94 A.H.):-

Ibn al-Musayyib, who is listed among the seven reputed jurists of Medina<sup>5</sup>, was not only a great faqīh but was an eminent muhaddith as well.<sup>6</sup> He used to hold ḥadīth sessions in Medina<sup>7</sup>, and was so zealous to collect the traditions that he travelled for days and nights in search of even a single ḥadīth.<sup>8</sup>

It is said that he disapproved of writing the traditions.<sup>9</sup> But from a report in which he appears giving express permission to 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Harmala (d. 145 A.H.) to record the traditions

<sup>1</sup> Annales, i, 1180, 1224-1225, 1234, 1284-1288, 1529, 1534, 1549, 1551, 1634-1636, 1654, 1669, 1670, 1770.; "Earliest Biographies...", IC, i, 536-539, 542-545.; Mecca, pp. xii, 40, 100-101, 106-107, 145-146, 180-182.; Zunūn, ii, 1746-1747.; Formative Period, 69-70.

<sup>2</sup> The book has survived in the form of extracts only. (cf. Annales i, 1180, 1224-1225, 1284-1288, et passim.; Futūh, 43, 90.; Musnad, iv, 323-326.; vi, 212.; SB, iii, 112, 115-117 (Maḡhāzī); iv, 395-396 (Aḥkām).

<sup>3</sup> Mecca, 182.

<sup>4</sup> Sīra (Guil.), pp. xiv, xv.; Historical sources, 128.; Annales, i, 1180, 1224, 1234, 1284, 1634, 1654, 1670.; iii, 2458.; Formative Period, 70.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdīth, 123.; Ma'rifat, 25-26.; Mudīyya, ii, 421-422.; Asmā', I, i, 220.

<sup>6</sup> Asmā', I, i, 220.; Ikmāl, 598.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, v, 96, 98.

<sup>8</sup> Tab, v, 89.; Bayān, i, 94.; Ma'rifat, 8.; Asmā', I, i, 220.

<sup>9</sup> Tdh, i, 105.; Bayān, ii, 144.; Taqyīd, 15, 20, 48.

transmitted by him<sup>1</sup>, it can be deduced that he had given up this prejudice in his later life.

That he approved of writing is evident from another report, saying that Ḥasan al-Baṣrī used to exchange letters with him when the former was confronted with difficult juristic problems.<sup>2</sup>

(13) Abū 'Uthmān an-Nahdī (d. 95 A.H.):-

Abū 'Uthmān died at an advanced age of 130.<sup>3</sup> He transmitted traditions from many eminent companions. A written collection of his transmitted ahādīth was preserved by Sulaymān at-Taymī.<sup>4</sup>

(14) Ibrāhīm b. Yazīd an-Nakha'ī (d. 96 A.H.):-

Ibrāhīm an-Nakha'ī, the famous jurist of Kufa, was an authority on ḥadīth and fiqh.<sup>5</sup> He was known as Sayrafī 'l-ḥadīth<sup>6</sup> (lit. money changer of ḥadīth), meaning, 'an expert in ascertaining the worth and genuineness of different traditions'. He was in favour of narrating the traditions according to their sense.<sup>7</sup>

Although he discouraged writing down ahādīth and used to say, 'Anyone who writes, depends on it'<sup>8</sup>, we find reports indicating his approval of such a practice. Thus we find Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān

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<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 36a.; Bayān, i, 73.; Tagyīd, 99.; Mizān, ii, 556, no. 4848.  
<sup>2</sup> Tdh, i, 52.  
<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, vi, 278.; Mashāhīr, 99, no. 734.  
<sup>4</sup> SB, iv, 115-116 (Adab).  
<sup>5</sup> Tdh, i, 69.; Asmā', I, i, 104-105.  
<sup>6</sup> Tdh, i, 69.; Asmā', I, i, 105.  
<sup>7</sup> Tab, VI, 190.  
<sup>8</sup> Tab, VI, 189.

writing down traditions in his lecture.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, when Qatāda and his colleagues wrote to him, asking some questions regarding foster relationship (ridā'), he sent them, in written form, the ahādīth from the Prophet and other companions.<sup>2</sup>

It is, however, certain that he himself possessed no written collection, as is suggested by his remark: 'Although I never wrote anything (for permanent recording), I wish I had done so.'<sup>3</sup>

(15) Sālim b. Abī 'l-Ja'd (d. 97 A.H.):-

The successor scholar, Sālim was considered a reliable transmitter of traditions, who transmitted from Ibn'Umar, Jābir and Anas etc. From him narrated his own sons and Manṣūr and Al-A'mash.<sup>4</sup>

It is reported that he preserved the traditions in written form.<sup>5</sup>

(16) Hasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya (d. 99 A.H.)<sup>6</sup>:-

The Shi'ite scholar<sup>7</sup> Ḥasan b. Muḥammad is recognised as a trustworthy narrator even by Sunnī scholars. He has transmitted ahādīth from Salama b. al-Akwa', Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh and others. Among those who narrated from him are 'Amr b. Dīnār and Zuhri.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tab, VI, 232.

<sup>2</sup> Fāsil, 48b.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VI, 189.

<sup>4</sup> Ikmāl, 599.; Ma'ārif, 156.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 108-109.; Tab, VI, 203.; Bayān, i, 70.; SD, i, 123.; Ma'ārif, 156-157.

<sup>6</sup> Asmā', I, i, 160. According to Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī he died in the reign of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65-86 A.H.). [cf. Mashāhīr, 62, no. 421].

<sup>7</sup> He seems to be inclined towards Sunnism. He used to say, "One who repudiated (denied the legitimacy of the caliphate of) Abū Bakr and 'Umar, he repudiated the sunna." (cf. Mashāhīr, 62, no. 421.)

<sup>8</sup> Asmā', I, i, 160.

He is credited with a booklet (risāla ṣaghīra) on beliefs (‘aṣā’id).<sup>1</sup>

(17) ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī (d. 99 A.H.):-

A distinguished member of the Prophet's family (ahl al-Bayt), ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad was a Qārī who had settled in Medina.<sup>2</sup> He is credited with a book, containing the ahādīth of the Prophet, which, later, came in possession of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās.<sup>3</sup>

(18) ‘Abd Allāh b. Hurmuz (d. 100 A.H.):-

‘Abd Allāh b. Hurmuz was a reliable transmitter who transmitted traditions from Sa‘īd and Muḥammad, the sons of ‘Ubayd al-Muzanī, and Abu Hurayra.<sup>4</sup>

He is said to have sent few ahādīth, in written form, to Tamīm al-Jayshānī.<sup>5</sup>

(19) Dhakwān Abū Ṣāliḥ (d. 101 A.H.):-

Abū Ṣāliḥ as Sammān<sup>6</sup> was the client of Juwayriyya bint al Aḥmas.<sup>7</sup> At the time of ‘Uthmān's assassination he was present in Medina.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mabāhith, 85.; Papyri, ii, 18, n.

<sup>2</sup> Mashāhīr, 127, no. 994.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, V, 241.; Tahdh, vi, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, vi, 62.; Musnad, ii, 531.

<sup>5</sup> Musnad, ii, 531.

<sup>6</sup> Also known as Zayyāt. Both 'Sammān' (lit. seller of butter) and 'Zayyāt' (lit. dealer in oil) indicate his profession. He used to bring the butter (samn) and olive oil (zayt) from Kufa to Medina to sell these merchandise there. (cf. Mashāhīr, 75, no. 530.; Tahdh, iii, 219.).

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, iii, 219.

Being an advocate of writing, he dictated traditions to his pupils. Al-A'mash<sup>1</sup> and Dhakwān's son Suhayl<sup>2</sup> had received some ahādīth from him in written form.

(20) 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 101 A.H.):-

It is around the name of this Umayyad pious caliph that revolves the much debated report of his commission to Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm to write down the traditions. As we shall be discussing this report at a great length elsewhere<sup>3</sup> let it not detain us here. Suffice to say that 'Umar, in his role as reviver and preserver of sunna,<sup>4</sup> not only ordered his governor and other scholars to record the traditions but he himself narrated and collected ahādīth. It is no wonder, therefore, that we find him listed among the traditionists.<sup>5</sup>

He had heard traditions from the leading traditionists like 'Urwa, Zuhri and Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm. Interestingly enough, these very scholars, in their turn, transmitted from him.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from hearing and transmitting orally, 'Umar also sometimes wrote the traditions down. An incidental reference to this practice of his is found in a report found in Dārimī's sunan. It is reported that once he was seen carrying with him a papyrus (qirtās). When Abū Qilāba

<sup>1</sup> He had received 1000 traditions from Dhakwān. (cf. Tdh, i, 83, 145-146.)

<sup>2</sup> Jarḥ, II, i, 246-247.; Mizān, ii, 243, no. 3604.

<sup>3</sup> See infra, pp. 488-494.

<sup>4</sup> He is reported to have sent more than one hundred letters to his governors and other officials asking them to act according to sunna. (cf. Musannaf, passim).

<sup>5</sup> Muḥādara, i, 145.; Asmā', I, ii, 17.; Jarḥ, III, i, 122.; Hilya, v, 359-360.; SB, i, 38 ('Ilm).; Tahdh, vii, 475-476.; Tdh, i, 112-114.

<sup>6</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 17.; Tahdh, vii, 475-476.; Papyri, ii, 25.

asked what that writing (al-kitāb) was, 'Umar replied, "It contains a ḥadīth narrated by 'Iwān b. 'Abd Allāh. Since it appeals to me, I have committed it to writing".<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, he is reported to have sent some written ahādīth to 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Ufayl al-Jazarī, who, in turn, transmitted them to his students.<sup>2</sup> It is also reported that he left a collection of manuscripts which, probably, came into the possession of Abū Qilāba.<sup>3</sup>

Over and above all this, 'Umar is reported to have collected the traditions in a musnad which has come down to us and is already edited by A.H. Harley.<sup>4</sup>

It is significant to note that 'Umar was also interested in dogmatic matters<sup>5</sup> as is evident from the reports about his dialogue with the famous Qadarite, Ghaylān b. Muslim ad-Dimashqī.<sup>6</sup> Apart from this, he is reported to have written a long letter on free will<sup>7</sup> and a treatise on the Jahmīyya sect.<sup>8</sup>

But his main contribution was in the field of ḥadīth and sunna. Although his reign lasted for a very short period of two and a half years and he died in his prime youth at the age of thirty-nine, his services to the collection and writing down of the ḥadīth is invaluable.

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<sup>1</sup> SD (Med.), i, 107.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, vii, 476.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, ii, 44.

<sup>4</sup> A.H. Harley, "The Musnad of 'Umar b. 'Abdī'l-'Azīz," Journal & Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, New Series XX (1924), 399-488.

<sup>5</sup> Formative Period, 85-86.

<sup>6</sup> Formative Period, 71, 86.; Papyri, i, 90.; ii, 28, 228.

<sup>7</sup> Papyri, i, 90.; ii, 28, 228.

<sup>8</sup> Papyri, ii, 28.

(21) Tā'ūs b. Kaysān (d. 101/106 A.H.):-

The famous Yemenite traditionist, Tā'ūs, who died at an advanced age of over ninety, is reported to have collected the traditions in written form. Looking at his life span, one expects several ḥadīth collections by him. The sources say that he did possess many books (kutub), but unfortunately they could not survive. It is reported that he asked his son to burn his manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> Although it is not mentioned whether the father's order was carried out, it appears that it was.

Tā'ūs used to insist on the literal transmission of the ḥadīth.<sup>2</sup> As he was not sure if this method could be strictly followed by others in transmitting his traditions, he decided to destroy the manuscript. Consequently he left a will to this effect.

In any case, it is certain that he possessed some ahādīth in written form.

(22) Mujāhid b. Jabr al-Bakkī (d. 102/103/104 A.H.):-

It is said that he was against writing.<sup>3</sup> But the reports about his practice not only of writing but also of dictating, disprove this assertion. It is reported that he had compiled a commentary on the Qur'ān<sup>4</sup> which was copied by some of his students.<sup>5</sup> Apart from the tafsīr, he also wrote down the traditions and preserved them in books. It is reported, for instance, that he took

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<sup>1</sup> Taqyīd, 61.; Maṣāhif, 195.; Tab, V, 393.

<sup>2</sup> Jarḥ, II, i, 501-502.; Tab, V, 394.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 19.; SD, i, 128.

<sup>4</sup> Taqyīd, 105.; Baḡh, xiii, 164.; Mizān, iii, 439, no. 7072.

<sup>5</sup> Taqyīd, 105.; SD, i, 128.



Abū Yahyā al-Kunāsī to his room and gave him his books (kutubahū) to copy them out.<sup>1</sup>

But like Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim, he did not allow his students to preserve the traditions in karārīs, which were reserved for the Qur'ān.<sup>2</sup>

He was in possession of Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh's books which he used for the transmission of ḥadīth to his students.<sup>3</sup>

(23) 'Aṭā' b. Yasār (d. 103 A.H.):-

'Aṭā' was a client of Maymūna, the wife of the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> The traditions narrated by him were preserved by the scholars of Medina, Syria and Egypt.<sup>5</sup>

As regards his own written collection, he possessed a book containing the traditions. It was read by 'Umar b. Ishāq b. Yasār.<sup>6</sup>

(24) Abū Salama b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. 'Awf (d. 104 A.H.):-

Abū Salama, one of the seven jurists of Medina and a school teacher, was a staunch advocate of ḥadīth writing. He used to attend the lectures of Fāṭima bint Qays and wrote down the traditions from her dictation.<sup>7</sup> Not only did he himself write

<sup>1</sup> Tacyīd, 105.; SD, i, 128.

<sup>2</sup> SD, i, 121, where the word 'ilm' has been used in the sense of ḥadīth.; Tacyīd, 105, n.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, V, 344.

<sup>4</sup> Mashāḥīr, 69, no. 474.

<sup>5</sup> Mashāḥīr, 69, no. 474.

<sup>6</sup> Ta'jīl, 296.; Musnad, vi, 333.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, viii, 200-201.; Musnad, vi, 413.; SM, ii, 683 (Talāq).

down the ahādīth<sup>1</sup> but he also dictated his store of knowledge to others.<sup>2</sup>

He was so keen in making the written record of the ḥadīth that he used to bring the school children to his house and dictate to them the traditions.<sup>3</sup>

(25) Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (d. 108 A.H.):-

Qāsim, an authority on ḥadīth and fich<sup>4</sup>, was a distinguished scholar of Medina. Ibn Sa'd describes him as "a reliable, authoritative jurist, who possessed a large number of ahādīth (kāna thiqatan...faqīhan imāman kathīr al-ḥadīth)".<sup>5</sup> His reputation as a scholar of ḥadīth had led 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz to ask his governor, Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm, to make a written collection from him.<sup>6</sup>

Qāsim was very careful in transmitting the traditions. He used to transmit them verbatim ('alā ḥurūfihī).<sup>7</sup> He, therefore, discouraged its recording, and is said to have disallowed one of his students to write down his dictation.<sup>8</sup> This does not mean that he dictated no tradition at all. We have seen that he had dictated few traditions to Khālīd b. Abī 'Imrān<sup>9</sup>. Another written collection

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<sup>1</sup> SD, ii, 135.

<sup>2</sup> Jarḥ, II, ii, 293-294.

<sup>3</sup> Bagh, i, 218.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, V, 143.; Tdh, i, 91.; Tahdh, viii, 334.; Asmā', I, ii, 55.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, V, 143.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, xii, 39.; Jarḥ (Intr.), 21.; Jarḥ, IV, ii, 337.

<sup>7</sup> Tab, V, 139.

<sup>8</sup> Tab, V, 140.

<sup>9</sup> Jarḥ, I, ii, 345.; Papyri, i, 22.; ii, 13, 43, 214.

of his ahādīth was made by Ṭalḥa b. 'Abd al-Malik al-Aylī. This collection must have been well authenticated for it was made under his strict supervision. It is reported that he had deputed his son to watch Ṭalḥa during his dictation.<sup>1</sup> This precaution was taken to check any mistake in recording his dictation.

It appears that some of his traditions were written down by Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad as well, for it is reported that the kutub prepared in compliance with 'Umar II's order to record Qāsim's ahādīth were lost.<sup>2</sup> This presupposes the writing down of Qāsim's ahādīth by Abū Bakr.

(26) 'Amir b. Sharāḥīl ash-Sha'bī (d. 110 A.H.):—

Sha'bī, the traditionist, the faqīh<sup>3</sup>, the judge, and the tutor of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik's son, was a distinguished scholar of Kufa. He was an authority on the fiqh and the ḥadīth. In Zuhri's words, "The leading scholars of the time are four: Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib in Medina, Sha'bī in Kufa, Ḥasan Baṣrī in Basra, and Makḥūl in Syria."<sup>4</sup> 'Āsim al-Aḥwal reports, "I have seen no one more well informed about the ahādīth current among the scholars of Kūfa, Baṣra and Ḥijāz, than Sha'bī".<sup>5</sup>

That Sha'bī was in favour of writing down the traditions has already been shown in a previous chapter.<sup>6</sup> There we had seen that the reports in which he is described as an opponent of

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<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 63b.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, xii, 39.

<sup>3</sup> Annales, ii, 613.

<sup>4</sup> Tdh, i, 76-77, 79.; Ikmāl, 619.

<sup>5</sup> Tdh, i, 79.

<sup>6</sup> See Supra, chapter IV, pp. 245-246.

writing should be interpreted to mean that he possessed such an excellent memory<sup>1</sup> that it dispensed him with the need of writing in order to preserve the information. Moreover, the facts that he lived in the age of Zuhri when writing was fairly common, that he strongly recommended writing for his students<sup>2</sup> and himself dictated to them<sup>3</sup>, and that he is credited with several books - all go to prove that he was an advocate of writing.

In fact he was one of the earliest compilers of the ḥadīth. This has been incidentally mentioned by his spiritual heir, Abū Ḥaṣīn 'Uthmān b. 'Āsim (d. 128), who reports that no books of Sha'bī were found after his death except the Farā'id and the Jarāhāt.<sup>4</sup> The sources, however, indicate the following works attributed to Sha'bī:

- (a) Kitāb al-Jarāhāt.<sup>5</sup>
- (b) Kitāb at-talāq.<sup>6</sup>
- (c) Kitāb al-Farā'id.<sup>7</sup>
- (d) A book on maghāzī.<sup>8</sup>

(e) A collection of ahādīth regarding legal matters. This collection was presented to him by 'Āsim al-Aḥwal so as to obtain permission to transmit it on his authority. The permission is said to have been granted.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Fāsil, 36b.; But in old age his memory was not so reliable. (cf. Bagh, xii, 229.).

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VI, 174-175.; Taqyīd, 100.; 'Ilm, 11b.; Bagh, xii, 227, 229, 232.; Tdh, i, 80.; Fāsil, 35b, 36a.

<sup>3</sup> Tdh, i, 80.; Tab, VI, 174.

<sup>4</sup> Tab, VI, 174, 224.; Bagh, xii, 232.; Panyri, ii, 228.

<sup>5</sup> Bagh, xii, 232.

<sup>6</sup> Tadrib, 24.

<sup>7</sup> Tahdh, ix, 177.; Jarh, IV, i, 41.; Bagh, xii, 232.

<sup>8</sup> Bagh, xii, 230.; Tahdh, x, 40.

<sup>9</sup> Kifāya, 386.

Sha'bi is reported to have been the first to arrange his traditional material (ahādīth) according to subject matter. He collected, for instance, the traditions regarding 'divorce' under the chapter heading 'ṭalaq' and remarked, "This is a large chapter on divorce (hādha bāb at-ṭalāq jasīm)."<sup>1</sup>

(27) Habīb b. Sālim:-

The successor scholar, Habīb was the client and scribe of An-Nu'mān b. Bashīr (d. 64 A.H.).<sup>2</sup> He is reported to have written down few ahādīth, which he sent to Qatāda.<sup>3</sup> Yazīd b. an-Nu'mān also received from him some traditions in written form.<sup>4</sup>

(28) Dahhāk b. Muzāhim (d. 105 A.H.):-

Dahhāk was a popular school teacher in Kufa.<sup>5</sup> It is said that he had such a large number of pupils - some 3000 children - that he used to make his rounds for their supervision on a donkey.<sup>6</sup> It is reported that he used to teach the art of writing free of charge.<sup>7</sup>

He was reputed as a scholar of the Qur'ān as well as the ḥadīth. On the former, he wrote a commentary<sup>8</sup> which was held in

<sup>1</sup> Tadrīb, 24.; Tawjīh, 7-8.; Fāsil, 78a-78b, with the variants "Bāb min at-ṭalāq jasīm" and "Bāb min al-fiqh jasīm".

<sup>2</sup> Ikmāl, 592.

<sup>3</sup> Musnad, iv, 276.

<sup>4</sup> Musnad, iv, 273.

<sup>5</sup> Tab, VI, 210-211.; Udabā', iv, 272-273.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 216, n.

<sup>6</sup> Udabā', iv, 272.; Mizān, ii, 325, no. 3942.; Tadwīn Ḥadīth, 216, n, where it is reported that out of 3000 pupils, seven hundred were girl students, which shows the popularity of female education in early Islam.

<sup>7</sup> Ma'ārif, 185.; Mashāhīr, 194, no. 1562.

<sup>8</sup> Tab, VI, 210-211.; VII, ii, 55, 102, 105.; Tacyīd, 19, 47, 100.; Kunā, i, 149.; Bagh, xiii, 165.; Jarḥ, I, ii, 319.; Maṣāhif, 134-135.

high esteem by Sufyān.<sup>1</sup> As regards the latter, he had dictated a book on al-manāsik to Husayn b. 'Aqīl.<sup>2</sup>

Although he wrote down the ḥadīth<sup>3</sup>, it is sometimes believed that he was against its recording.<sup>4</sup> In support of this assertion, the following statement of his is quoted:

"Lā tattakhidhū li'l-ḥadīth karārīs kakarārīs al-masāḥif".<sup>5</sup>

The above statement has been freely translated as "Do not collect the hadythes into regular books like the Qur'an".<sup>6</sup> This gives the impression that Ḍaḥḥāk was against recording of the traditions. But if we translate the passage in its historical context, we would reach a different conclusion. Ḍaḥḥāk, we know, belonged to the group of scholars who gave unique authority to the Qur'ān.<sup>7</sup> He was so zealous in proving the superiority of the Qur'ān over the ḥadīth that he disliked even placing the ḥadīth books on the reading stand (kursī) since the Qur'ān used to be so placed.<sup>8</sup> In the same manner, he disapproved of recording the ḥadīth in those karārīs (quires or sections) in which the Qur'ān used to be written.

Viewed in this light, we can say that Ḍaḥḥāk was not against

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<sup>1</sup> Ṭab, VII, ii, 55.; Kunā, i, 149.; Bagh, xiii, 165.

<sup>2</sup> Bayān, i, 72.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, i, 52, 97-98.; ii, 16, 112.

<sup>4</sup> Ṭaqyīd, 19, 47.

<sup>5</sup> Ṭaqyīd, 19, 47.

<sup>6</sup> "Origins of writing...", JASB, xxv, p. 309.

<sup>7</sup> Bayān, i, 67.; Ṭaqyīd, 47-48.

<sup>8</sup> Masāḥif, 135. (Lā tattakhidhū li'l-ḥadīth karārīs kakarārīs 'l-masāḥif).

writing the ḥadīth as such; he opposed its writing only in types of note-books which in his time were used for recording the Qur'ān. Thus it appears that the erroneous conclusion that Ḍaḥḥāk was opposed to written tradition was mainly due to following reasons.

Firstly, Ḍaḥḥāk's view regarding the status of the Qur'ān vis-a-vis the ḥadīth was not taken into consideration. Secondly, the term karārīs was interpreted in a general sense of 'books' without noting the emphasis that had been laid on its genitive 'al-masāḥif'. What in fact the statement suggests is this that only the type of karārīs (perhaps of a definite size and format) which was used for recording the Qur'ān should not be employed for writing down the ḥadīth. Otherwise, the traditions as a rule could be recorded. This prohibition of Ḍaḥḥāk was quite in accord with the view of the Qur'ān scholars who advocated special script, unique format and the reading stand (kursī) exclusively for the Qur'ān.

(29) Abān b. Uthmān (d. 105 A.H.):-

Abān is mentioned among the fuqahā' of Medina.<sup>1</sup> He was a distinguished scholar of the ḥadīth, the fiqh and the maghāzī.<sup>2</sup> Scholars unanimously agree on his trustworthiness.<sup>3</sup>

It is reported that he wrote down few traditions concerning the life of the Prophet in a book. He was in fact 'the first who put into writing a special collection dealing with the maghāzī'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Asmā', I, i, 97.; Tahdh, i, 97.

<sup>2</sup> Asmā', I, i, 97.; "Earliest biographies..." IC, i, 536-539.

<sup>3</sup> Asmā', I, i, 97.; Tahdh, i, 97.

<sup>4</sup> "Earliest biographies...", IC, i, 539.



A copy of this book was possessed by Al-Mughīra b. 'Abd ar-Rahmān, who is said to have asked his sons to learn it.<sup>1</sup>

(30) Sālim b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar (d. 106 A.H.):-

He is reckoned among the 'seven jurists' of Medina.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, he was an opponent of written ḥadīth but his views weakened in the end, and he encouraged his students to write down the traditions.<sup>3</sup> It is reported that Khālīd b. Abī 'Imrān (d. 125 A.H.) a Tunisian scholar, had a large collection (kitāb kabīr) containing the traditions transmitted by Sālim b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar, Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and Sulaymān b. Yasār.<sup>4</sup>

As we have seen earlier, the kitāb as-sadaqa, which was dictated by the Prophet for the guidance of the provincial governors, ultimately reached the family of 'Umar and was later found in possession of Sālim and his brother 'Abd Allāh.<sup>5</sup>

It was from them that the caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz borrowed the book and made a copy therefrom.<sup>6</sup> Zuhri is said to have learnt this book by heart.<sup>7</sup>

From a report found in Suyūṭi's Tārīkh al-Khulafā' it appears that Sālim himself copied the book and sent to the caliph on the latter's request.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tab, V, 156.

<sup>2</sup> Asmā', I, i, 97, 208.; Iknāl, 599.

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, ii, 198.

<sup>4</sup> Papyri, ii, 214.

<sup>5</sup> SAD, ii, 133 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1570.

<sup>6</sup> SAD, ii, 133 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1570.; Jāmi', iii, 106, n. (Zakāt).

<sup>7</sup> SAD, ii, 133 (Zakāt), ḥadīth no. 1570.; Jāmi', iii, 106, n. (Zakāt).

<sup>8</sup> Khulafā', 231.

(31) Abū Mijlāz (d. 106/109 A.H.):-

Abū Mijlāz Lāḥiq b. Ḥumayd as-Sadūsī was an eminent Baṣran scholar who is reputed for his collection of traditions concerning the biography of the Prophet. He transmitted from Jundub b. 'Abd Allāh, Anas b. Mālīk, Ḥafṣa, Abū Mūsā, and others.<sup>1</sup> He was considered a trustworthy narrator of aḥādīth.<sup>2</sup>

His transmitted material is rather large and 'there is every reason to suppose', says Sprenger, 'that they have been taken down during his lifetime'.<sup>3</sup>

(32) Sulaymān b. Yasār (d. 107/109 A.H.):-

The freed slave of Maymūna, Sulaymān b. Yasār was one of the seven jurists of Medina. He transmitted the traditions from Abū Hurayra, Māyṁūna and others.<sup>4</sup>

As regards the written record of ḥadīth with him, it is reported that he possessed a book (kitāb) which was transmitted by Bukayr.<sup>5</sup> Later, this kitāb was inherited by Bukayr's son Makhrama.<sup>6</sup>

(33) 'Utba b. Ḥumayd ad-Dabbī (d. c 110 A.H.):-

'Utba was a serious minded student of ḥadīth. He is said to have travelled a lot in quest of traditions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 70.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 157.; Asmā', I, ii, 70.

<sup>3</sup> "Von Kremer's edition...", JASB, xxv, 1856, p. 220.; Also see Ṭab, VII, i, 157.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, iv, 228-229.

<sup>5</sup> Līzān, iv, 81, no. 8384.; Tahdh, x, 70-71.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, x, 70.

<sup>7</sup> Tahdh, vii, 96.

He not only heard the traditions from his teachers but also wrote them down. It is reported that he committed to writing 'a large number' of ahādīth.<sup>1</sup>

(34) Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110 A.H.):—

It is generally believed that Muḥammad b. Sīrīn was an opponent of written ḥadīth.<sup>2</sup> But it appears that his dislike of writing down the traditions was confined to the recording for posterity<sup>3</sup> — a view held by several other traditionists as well. Otherwise, he approved of writing the traditions and even dictated them.<sup>4</sup> It is reported, for instance, that he dictated few traditions to Hishām b. Ḥassān, who wiped them out after memorising.<sup>5</sup>

But despite this careful written transmission, a collection (nuskha) containing the ahādīth narrated by him was preserved by Awzā'ī.<sup>6</sup> Not only this, Muḥammad b. Sīrīn himself appears to have written a book which came in possession of his brother Yaḥyā b. Sīrīn.<sup>7</sup>

The contradictory reports about his approval and disapproval of writing down the traditions can be harmonised by maintaining that in his earlier days he was in favour of recording the ḥadīth but he abandoned this practice in later days. It was, probably, in this later period that he handed over his book to his brother.

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<sup>1</sup> Jarḥ, III, i, 370.; Tahdh, vii, 96.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 141.; ʿIlm, 11-b.; Taʿyīd, 46, 61.; SD, i, 120, 122.; Bayān, i, 67.

<sup>3</sup> Fāsil, 36b.

<sup>4</sup> Ṭab, VII, i, 141.; Taʿyīd, 60.

<sup>5</sup> Mizān, iv, 297, no. 9220.; Fāsil, 36b.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, vi, 240.

<sup>7</sup> Imlā, 173. —Also see supra, 365, n. 6.

(35) Rajā' b. Haywa (d. 112 A.H.):-

The Syrian theologian-traditionist, Rajā' b. Hawya possessed a large number of traditions and was famous for his knowledge of fiqh as well.<sup>1</sup> He used to transmit from Abū 'd-Dardā', Mu'adh b. Jabal, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh, and a host of other companions and successors.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that he used to write down the traditions. This is implied in the following report: Once Hishām asked Rajā' for a certain ḥadīth whereupon the latter commented, 'Had it not been preserved with me in writing, I would have forgotten it'.<sup>3</sup>

(36) Makhūl Ash-Shāmī (d. 112/118 A.H.):-

Makhūl, the teacher of the famous Zuhri, was a distinguished Syrian scholar who is reported to have possessed several written collections of ahādīth. He was an assiduous collector of the traditions who had travelled widely in its quest.<sup>4</sup> In his own words, 'I have travelled round the world in search of 'ilm'.<sup>5</sup>

He is credited with three works, entitled 'Kitāb as-sunan fi'l-fiqh'<sup>6</sup>, 'Kitāb al-masā'il fi 'l-fiqh'<sup>7</sup> and 'Kitāb al-Hajj'.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Asmā', I, i, 190.

<sup>2</sup> Asmā', I, i, 190.; Tahdh, iii, 265.

<sup>3</sup> Taqyīd, 108.; SD, i, 125.

<sup>4</sup> Mst, ii, 33/42.; Tdh, i, 102, where it is said that not only did he travel through Egypt and Syria and had lived for sometimes in Medina, but he had travelled round the world, accumulating the traditions from eminent scholars.

<sup>5</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 114.; Jarh, IV, i, 407.; 'Ilm', 5a.

<sup>6</sup> Papyri, ii, 245.; Mst, ii, 212/197.; Fihrist, 318.

<sup>7</sup> Fihrist, 318.

<sup>8</sup> Tahdh, viii, 178.

Among the scholars who had derived the traditions from him in written form were 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Ubayd al-Kalā'i,<sup>1</sup> al-'Alā' b. al-Hārith<sup>2</sup>, 'Amr b. al-Walīd<sup>3</sup>, and al-'Alā' b. Kathīr.<sup>4</sup>

While most of Makhūl's students made their collections through dictation and then reading them out to him,<sup>5</sup> a few had the privilege of receiving ready-made copies from the teacher. The traditionist 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Ubayd al-Kalā'i, for instance, was given a book (daftar) with the remark, "Take this book and transmit it on my authority".<sup>6</sup>

(37) 'Abd Allāh b. Bishr al-Kātib (d. c 113 A.H.):-

'Abd Allāh was considered a trustworthy transmitter, whose traditions used to be recorded by his students.<sup>7</sup> Shu'ba, one of his pupils, is said to have possessed one such collection.<sup>8</sup>

(38) Yazīd b. Sufyān, Abū 'l-Muhazzim (d. c 115 A.H.):-

Yazīd transmitted traditions from Abū Hurayra.<sup>9</sup> It is reported that Shu'ba, one of his students, wrote down one hundred ahādith from him.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kifāya, 458.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, viii, 178.

<sup>3</sup> Kifāya, 387.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, viii, 191.

<sup>5</sup> Kifāya, 385, 387.

<sup>6</sup> Kifāya, 458.

<sup>7</sup> Tahdh, v, 161.

<sup>8</sup> Kifāya (Hyd.), 231.; Tahdh, v, 161.

<sup>9</sup> Tahdh, xii, 249..

<sup>10</sup> Tahdh, xii, 249.; Jarh, IV, ii, 269.

(39) 'Uthmān b. Ḥādir al-Himyārī (d. c 115 A.H.) :-

The Yemenite traditionist, 'Uthmān b. Ḥādir was one of the pupils of Ibn 'Abbās.<sup>1</sup> He came to Mecca and related the traditions there. It is reported that these narrations of his were written down by the people of Ḥijāz.<sup>2</sup>

(40) Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba (d. 115 A.H.) :-

Ḥakam, the well known jurist of Kufa, transmitted traditions from Shurayḥ, Ibn Abī Laylā, Sa'īd b. Jubayr and others. Among the scholars who narrated from him were Awzā'i and Shu'ba etc.<sup>3</sup> His ḥadīth session in the mosque was attended by a huge crowd which included the reputed scholars of the day.

He was famed both for his knowledge of fiqh and ḥadīth and was called a 'faqīh' and 'sāhib sunna'.<sup>4</sup>

As for his written material of aḥādīth, it is reported that he wrote down a sizeable ḥadīth collection from various oral and written sources.<sup>5</sup> He derived, for instance, the aḥādīth from Miqsam b. Bujra (d. 101 A.H.)<sup>6</sup>, Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 102 A.H.)<sup>7</sup> and Yaḥyā b. Jazzār al-'Uranī (d. c 80 A.H.)<sup>8</sup>, in written form.

He had given his own written collection of aḥādīth to

<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, vii, 109.; Mashāhīr, 124, no. 976.

<sup>2</sup> Mashāhīr, 124, no. 976.

<sup>3</sup> Tdh, i, 110.

<sup>4</sup> Tdh, i, 111.

<sup>5</sup> Bagh, vii, 348.; Tdh, i, 110-111.; Papyri, ii, 44.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, ii, 434.; x, 289.; Jarḥ, (Intr.), 130.

<sup>7</sup> Mashāhīr, 146, no. 1153.; Tahdh, ii, 434.

<sup>8</sup> Bagh, vii, 348.; Tahdh, ii, 305.

Ḥasan b. 'Umāra (d. 153 A.H.), a fellow traditionist of his.<sup>1</sup> The Baṣran Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160 A.H.) is also reported to have received a sackful of rare 'Alid traditions from Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba.<sup>2</sup>

(41) Al-A'raj (d. 117 A.H.):—

Abū Dā'ūd 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Hurmuz al-A'raj was not only a Qur'ān copyist<sup>3</sup> but also a ḥadīth scholar.<sup>4</sup> He was a teacher of many famous traditionists, including Zuhri<sup>5</sup>, Abū 'z-Zinād<sup>6</sup> and Mālik b. Anas<sup>7</sup>. He travelled from Medina to Syria and Egypt in search of ahādīth.<sup>8</sup> It is reported that his traditional material was committed to writing by his pupils.<sup>9</sup> Among the students who wrote down the traditions transmitted by him were Zuhri (d. 124 A.H.)<sup>10</sup>, Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb (d. 128 A.H.)<sup>11</sup>, Abū 'z-Zinād (d. 130 A.H.)<sup>12</sup> and 'Ikrima b. 'Ammār (d. 159 A.H.).<sup>13</sup>

He used to encourage his students to read back their written material to him, whereupon he permitted them to use the 'ḥaddathanā'

<sup>1</sup> Tdh, i, 110-111.; Bagh, vii, 348.; Papyri, i, 23.; ii, 50, n. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Bagh, ix, 259-260.; Hilya, vii, 157.; Tdh, i, 110-111.; Papyri, ii, 50.

<sup>3</sup> Mashāhīr, 77, no. 559 (kāna yaktub al-masāhif).; Tagyīd, 59.; Tdh, i, 91

<sup>4</sup> Tab, V, 209.; Asmā', I, i, 305-306.

<sup>5</sup> Tagyīd, 59.; Asmā', I, i, 306.; Jarḥ, II, ii, 297.; Papyri, ii, 44.

<sup>6</sup> Imlā', 173.; Asmā', I, i, 306.

<sup>7</sup> Papyri, ii, 124, 139.

<sup>8</sup> Papyri, ii, 41.; Tab, V, 209.

<sup>9</sup> Tab, V, 209.; Tagyīd, 59.

<sup>10</sup> He wrote only lengthy ahādīth of A'raj. (cf. Tagyīd, 59.)

<sup>11</sup> Kifāya (Hyd.), 355.

<sup>12</sup> Imlā', 173.

<sup>13</sup> Tagyīd, 59.



(instead of 'akhbaranā') formula while transmitting the same traditions to others.<sup>1</sup>

Although He had heard the traditions from Abū Hurayra, Abū Sa'īd and many successors<sup>2</sup>, he was considered an authority on the traditions which he transmitted from Abū Hurayra.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, scholars unanimously agree on his trustworthiness.<sup>4</sup>

(42) Bukayr b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ashajj (d. 117/127 A.H.):-

Bukayr transmitted traditions from the companions, Sā'ib b. Yazīd and Rabī'a b. 'Ibād, and from a group of successors, including Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib and Sālim b. 'Abd Allāh.<sup>5</sup> He seems to have made several collections of aḥādīth, for we read that his son Makhrama (d. 159 A.H.) used to transmit from the kutub (books) of his father.<sup>6</sup>

It is said that Makhrama did not hear these kutub from his father<sup>7</sup>, implying that no express permission was given by Bukayr to transmit his traditions. The report, however, says that Makhrama transmitted from these books. It is not certain whether he got his father's books by will or by wijāda (finding of the manuscripts after the death of the author). But undoubtedly he received them and transmitted its traditions without permission to relate - a practice for which he was criticised by scholars.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tab, V, 209.; Nasādir, 182.; Papyri, ii, 139.

<sup>2</sup> Asmā', I, i, 306.

<sup>3</sup> Asmā', I, i, 305.; Papyri, ii, 17, 38, 124-125, 139-140, 178.; Tahdh, v, 291.

<sup>4</sup> Asmā', I, i, 306.; Tahdh, v, 290-291.

<sup>5</sup> Asmā', I, i, 135.

<sup>6</sup> Jarḥ, IV, i, 363-364.; Mizān, iv, 81, no. 8384.; Tahdh, x, 70-71.

<sup>7</sup> Mizān, iv, 81, no. 8384.

<sup>8</sup> Jarḥ, IV, i, 363-364.

It is significant to note that it is one of the earliest examples of the wijāda method of the transmission of ḥadīth.

(43) Jamīl b. Zayd at-Tā'ī:-

Jamīl transmitted traditions from Ibn'Umar and Ka'b b. Zayd (variant: Zayd b. Ka'b), and from him transmitted Ath-Thawrī, Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh, Abū Mu'āwiya, Ismā'il b. Zakariyya and others.

He is said to have possessed a written collection of traditions transmitted by Ibn'Umar. He himself describes the time and place of its recording. He states that when, after Ibn'Umar's death, he visited Medina he wrote down the traditions transmitted by him.<sup>1</sup> As this took place after Ibn'Umar's death, the collection could have been made either through the oral transmission of one of Ibn'Umar's pupils or through copying from an already written manuscript. In any case it is certain that Jamīl possessed few ahādīth in written form.

(44) 'Abd ar-Rahmān b. Sābiṭ (d. 118 A.H.):-

'Abd ar-Rahmān b. Sābiṭ was a reliable transmitter of traditions.<sup>2</sup> It seems that not only did he narrate the ahādīth but also dictated them to his students. It is reported, for instance, that Jābir b. Zayd (d. 93 A.H.) used to write down the traditions from him.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, ii, 114.; Tajīl, 73.; Mizān, i, 423, no. 1556.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, vi, 181.

<sup>3</sup> Tacyīd, 109.; Bayān, i, 72.

(45) Habīb b. Abī Thābit (d. 119 A.H.):-

Habīb was a trustworthy scholar who heard the traditions from Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās.<sup>1</sup>

It is reported on his own testimony that he possessed one solitary ḥadīth which he kept preserved in a box. He says; "I possess no written material except a (single) tradition which I have preserved in my trunk (tābūtī)".<sup>2</sup>

(46) Qays b. Sa'd al-Ḥabshī (d. 119 A.H.):-

Qays<sup>3</sup> was a school teacher in Mecca who not only taught the traditions to his pupils orally but also dictated them.<sup>4</sup> It is said that he had collected the traditions in a kitāb<sup>5</sup> which came, either by will or by wijāda, into the possession of Ḥammād b. Salama b. Dīnār (d. 167 A.H.), a leading Basran scholar.<sup>6</sup> Of this Ḥammād, it is said that he possessed no other book save that of the kitāb of Qays b. Sa'd.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mizān, i, 451, no. 1690.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VI, 223.

<sup>3</sup> Sprenger wrongly identifies him as Qays b. Sa'd b. 'Ubāda al-Khazrajī, who died in 60/85 A.H. (cf. "Origins of writing...", JASB, XXV, 1856, p. 324, n.) He was entirely a different person whose career was more of political than of academic nature. (cf. Mashāḥir, 61, no. 418.). The author of the book referred to here (and in Sprenger's article) was most likely this Qays b. Sa'd al-Ḥabshī (d. 117/119 A.H.) who is described as "one of the older scholars and revered jurists of Mecca (min qudamā' mashā'ikh makka wa jullat fuqahā'ihim)" - (cf. Mashāḥir, 146, no. 1151.)

<sup>4</sup> Mizān, iii, 397, no. 6915.; Tahdh, vii, 244.

<sup>5</sup> Tahdh, iii, 15.; Jarḥ, III, ii, 99.; Tdh, i, 190.

<sup>6</sup> Mizān, i, 592, no. 2251.; Mashāḥir, 146, no. 1151.; Tahdh, iii, 15.; Tdh, i, 189-190.

<sup>7</sup> Mizān, i, 592, no. 2251.; Mashāḥir, 146, no. 1151.; Tahdh, iii, 15.; Jarḥ, III, ii, 99.; Tdh, i, 190.

(47) Abū Rajā' Laṭar b. Ṭahmān (d. 119 A.H.):—

The Khurasanian scholar, Abū Rajā' came to Basra and settled down there. By profession, he was a warrāq (stationer, bookseller and copyist) and used to write down the ahādīth. It appears that he wrote some traditions from 'Abd Allāh b. Burayda al-Aslamī (d. 115 A.H.)<sup>1</sup>.

He was the client of Abū Qilāba (d. 104 A.H.) and had access to his manuscripts, from which he transmitted. He also narrated the traditions from Ibn Sīrīn, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Shu'ba, Sa'īd b. Abī 'Arūba and Ḥammād b. Salama.<sup>2</sup>

(48) Zayd b. Rufay' al-Jazarī:—

The Syrian jurist, Zayd used to transmit the traditions from 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 82 A.H.), while his own ahādīth were transmitted by Muḥammad b. Ḥamza.<sup>3</sup>

He is credited with a written collection of ahādīth (kitāb), which was in possession of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Yūsuf.<sup>4</sup> It is reported that Ḥammād b. 'Amr an-Naṣībī copied this book from 'Abd al-Ḥamīd and transmitted its traditions directly on the authority of Zayd.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, he was declared an untrustworthy transmitter.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, vi, 158.

<sup>2</sup> Jarḥ, IV, i, 287-288.; Kunā, ii, 173-174.; Annales, iii, 2502.; Hilya, ii, 284.

<sup>3</sup> Mizān, ii, 103, no. 3006.

<sup>4</sup> Mizān, i, 598, no. 2262.; Bagh, viii, 154.

<sup>5</sup> Mizān, i, 598, no. 2262.

<sup>6</sup> Mizān, i, 598, no. 2262.

(49) Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān (d. 119/120 A.H.):-

Ḥammād was one of the leading jurists of Kufa<sup>1</sup>, who transmitted the traditions from Ibrāhīm an-Nakha'ī and others.<sup>2</sup> He was in favour of writing and was practically seen as recording the traditions transmitted by Ibrāhīm an-Nakha'ī.<sup>3</sup> In his turn, he dictated to his own students. The famous Abū Ḥanīfa, one of his students<sup>4</sup>, is said to have written down few ahādīth from him.<sup>5</sup> Among others who received written ahādīth from him were Shu'ba<sup>6</sup> and Muḥammad b. Jābir al-Yamānī.<sup>7</sup>

He is said to have received a book (kitāb), containing rules of zakāt, from Thumāma b. 'Abd Allāh b. Anas. This kitāb was kept preserved in the latter's family since the time of Abū Bakr<sup>8</sup>, who had sent it to Anas while he was the governor of Baḥrayn.<sup>9</sup>

(50) Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-A'lā al-Ju'fī:-

Ibrāhīm was regarded as a trustworthy transmitter whose transmission used to be written down.<sup>10</sup> Among the students who transmitted from Ibrāhīm were Isrā'īl and Thawrī.<sup>11</sup> Isrā'īl is said to have written down few traditions of his teacher and sent them to Shu'ba on the latter's request.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bayān, ii, 153.; Mīzān, i, 595, no. 2253.

<sup>2</sup> Tab, VI, 232.; Ikmāl, 591.

<sup>3</sup> Tab, VI, 232.; 'Ilm, 11a, 11b.

<sup>4</sup> Athār, 3 (Intr.); Bayān, ii, 153-154.; Bagh, xiii, 323-324.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, ii, 153-154.; Jarḥ, IV, i, 450.

<sup>6</sup> Tārīkh al-Islām, vi, 193.

<sup>7</sup> Jarḥ, IV, i, 450.

<sup>8</sup> Taqyīd, 87.

<sup>9</sup> Taqyīd, 87.; SAD, ii, 129, ḥadīth no. 1567 (Zakāt).; SB, i, 366-368 (Zakāt); iv, 339 (Ḥiyal).; SH, v, 18-23 (Zakāt); SIM, i, 551-552 (Zakāt).

<sup>10</sup> Tahdh, i, 137.

<sup>11</sup> Tahdh, i, 137.

<sup>12</sup> Tahdh, i, 137-138.; Jarḥ, I, i, 112.

(51) Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. Ḥazm al-Anṣārī (d. 117 A.H.)::-

Abū Bakr was a leading traditionist of Medina with whom ‘Umar II had scholarly discussions during the latter's governorship of Mecca and Medina (86-93 A.H.).

He was related to ‘Amra bint ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān (d. 96/106 A.H.) - she being his maternal aunt -, who was an authority on the traditions related by ‘Ā’isha and Umm Salama.<sup>1</sup>

When ‘Umar II became caliph and decided to codify the sunna officially, he wrote to this Abū Bakr, his governor in Medina, to collect and send to him the traditions in general, and the aḥādīth in possession of ‘Amra bint ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān<sup>2</sup> and Qāsim b. Muḥammad<sup>3</sup> in particular.<sup>4</sup> In compliance with this order Abū Bakr is said to have approached these scholars and prepared a collection of their aḥādīth. But before he could despatch this material to the caliph, the latter died.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zuhri was so impressed by ‘Amra's knowledge that he described her as an inexhaustible ocean (bahr la yundhaf) [cf. Tdh, i, 106.]. ‘Umar II also acknowledged her as a great scholar and had said, "No one is more acquainted with the ḥadīth narrated by ‘Ā’isha than ‘Amra" (cf. Tahdh, xii, 439.). For this reason ‘Umar had asked Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad to collect the traditions from his maternal aunt ‘Amra. Abū Bakr and Zuhri used to transmit traditions from her. (cf. Tab, VIII, 353.). In her turn, she narrated from ‘Ā’isha, Umm Salama and others. Sprenger says, "‘Amrah...had collected a great many traditions from ‘Āyshah and other wives of the Prophet..." (cf. "Von Kremer's edition...", JASB, 1856, p.209.)

<sup>2</sup> ‘Amra, as we have seen, was Abū Bakr's aunt who enjoyed the reputation of a distinguished scholar of the day.

<sup>3</sup> Qāsim, the nephew and pupil of ‘Ā’isha, was highly reputed for his knowledge of the sunna. He was held in such high esteem by ‘Umar II that it is said that 'had he been free to do so, he would have nominated him as his successor to the caliphate'. (cf. Tab, V, 140.; Papyri, ii, 30.; Tdh, i, 91.)

<sup>4</sup> Muwatta’ (Sh), 389.; Amwāl, 578.; Tab, II, ii, 134.; VIII, 353.; Tacyid, 105.; SD, i, 126.; Hawālik, i, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Hawālik, i, 4.

The above report has remained a debatable issue for a considerable length of time. While Goldziher<sup>1</sup>, and following him Guillaume<sup>2</sup>, along with other eminent scholars<sup>3</sup>, especially Schacht<sup>4</sup>, have doubted its authenticity, the equally reputed scholars like Muir<sup>5</sup>, Horowitz<sup>6</sup>, and following them Nabia Abbott<sup>7</sup>, have proved the genuineness of the report.

Agreeing with the second group of scholars, I strongly believe that such an instruction was sent by 'Umar II not only to Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm in Medina, but to several other scholars of his time. Zuhri's statement that a large number of ahādīth were written down in many volumes (daftaran daftaran), the copies of which were sent to each territory under 'Umar II's authority<sup>8</sup>, clearly describes the completion of the commission of the caliph.

Furthermore, considering the caliph's deep interest in the field of ḥadīth<sup>9</sup>, it is not at all surprising that such a step would have been taken by him during his caliphate. The facts that he had appointed paid teachers to teach the Qur'ān<sup>10</sup>, had helped and financed the students and the teachers of fich<sup>11</sup>, sent instruction

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<sup>1</sup> Est., ii, 210-211/195.

<sup>2</sup> Traditions, 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> AJSL, lii, 248.; Asiatique, 4th series, xv, 168.

<sup>4</sup> OMJ, 62.

<sup>5</sup> Mahomet, i, p. xxx-xxxi.

<sup>6</sup> "Earliest biographies", IC, ii, 24.

<sup>7</sup> Papyri, ii, 25-32.

<sup>8</sup> Amwāl, 578-580.; Bayān, i, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Luhabbar, 477.; Tab., V, 284.; Annales, ii, 1183.; "Earliest biographies..." IC, i, 546.

<sup>10</sup> Hadīth lit., 9.

<sup>11</sup> Hadīth lit., 9.; Bayān, i, 186.; Papyri, ii, 24.



to the governor of Medina that weekly lectures should be held on ḥadīth<sup>1</sup>, sent religious teachers to Egypt and North Africa to teach its people the religion in general,<sup>2</sup> encouraged the scholars to spread religious knowledge<sup>3</sup>, and urged people to attend Zuhri's lectures on ḥadīth,<sup>4</sup> these and many other reports regarding his deep interest in religious knowledge in general and in the ḥadīth in particular make us believe that he had sent circular orders to his governors to collect the aḥādīth.<sup>5</sup>

Among these circulars was the instruction sent to his Medinan governor, Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm, in whose written collection of aḥādīth we are concerned at the moment. The earliest report of this commission of 'Umar II, as found in Shaybānī's recension of Mālik's Muwatta', reads as follows:

" 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Azīz wrote to Abū Bakr b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm: 'Look for what there is of the ḥadīth of the messenger of Allāh, may peace be upon him, or of his sunna, or of the ḥadīth of 'Umar, or some such thing (aw nahw hādihā) and write it down for me, for I fear the extinction of knowledge (durūs al-'ilm) and the passing away of the scholars'."<sup>6</sup>

Nabia Abbott, in her monumental work on ḥadīth<sup>7</sup>, discusses the above report at great length and proves its authenticity.<sup>8</sup> But

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<sup>1</sup> Ḥadīth lit., 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭib, i, 130.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 124.; Imlā', 44.

<sup>4</sup> Jarḥ, I, i, 18.; Papyri, ii, 31.

<sup>5</sup> Fāsil, 35b.

<sup>6</sup> Muwatta' (Sh), 389.

<sup>7</sup> Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri, vol. II, Chicago, 1967.

<sup>8</sup> Papyri, ii, 26-32.

she claims that the phrase 'ḥadīth 'Umar' (ḥadīth of 'Umar) occurring in the report is an error which should be rectified by substituting the word "Umar" to "Amra", as has been done by Ibn Sa'd.<sup>1</sup> With this suggested amendment she concludes that 'Umar II had asked Abū Bakr to send to him the traditions in possession of 'Amra bint 'Abd ar-Raḥmān only.

If we were to accept Abbott's theory, the question would arise why there is no mention of Qāsim b. Muḥammad's name in this particular report, while other reports, including that of Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī (also quoted by Abbott)<sup>2</sup>, give both 'Amra's and Qāsim's names together.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, how can Dārimī's version<sup>4</sup>, which also gives the name of 'Umar, be interpreted? Will it also be modified in the light of Ibn Sa'd's version?

Truly speaking, there is no valid ground to doubt the authenticity of the report simply because 'Umar's name occurs in it. As a matter of fact, both the phrases "ḥadīth 'Umar" and "some such thing (i.e. reports of other companions)" are very significant, for they show that the caliph had not only asked Abū Bakr to collect the traditions of the Prophet - both his sayings and actions - but also the sayings and practices of other companions.

In order to interpret the above report, we have to take into consideration 'Umar's general policy to codify the sunna officially,

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<sup>1</sup> Papyri, ii, 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> Papyri, ii, 30.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, xii, 39.; Jarh (Intr.), 21.; Jarh, IV, ii, 337.

<sup>4</sup> SD, i, 126.; SD (Med.), i, 104.

and have to bear in mind that he had issued several instructions to different people asking them to collect the sunna. Viewed in this light, we may rightly presume that he had issued two (instead of one) circulars to obtain the traditions of 'Umar I, Qāsim and 'Amra. In the first circular he asked for the traditions of 'Amra and Qāsim; in the second, the traditions of 'Umar I. While reporting 'Umar's commission, some scholars seem to have referred to the first circular, while others mentioned only the second one.

The premise that the circular regarding the ahādīth of 'Amra and Qāsim was different from the instruction to collect the Prophet's and 'Umar's ahādīth, can be substantiated by the report occurring in Dārimī's sunan. Here, the report reads as follows: "Write down to me the authentic ḥadīth from the Apostle and from 'Umar, for I fear the extinction of ilm and passing away of scholars".<sup>1</sup>

We notice that while on the one hand the ahādīth of 'Umar have been expressly mentioned, on the other, no reference has been made about the traditions of 'Amra and Qāsim. Thus it is evident that the name of 'Umar in this (as well as in Shaybānī's) report is quite genuine, and need not, therefore, be considered as a substitute of 'Amra, as claimed by Abbott.

The question, however, arises as to why 'Amra and Qāsim were specifically mentioned in one of the two circulars mentioned above. The answer to this is very simple. It is quite well known that both Qāsim<sup>2</sup> and 'Amra<sup>3</sup> were considered authorities on ḥadīth. Furthermore,

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<sup>1</sup> SD, i, 126.; SD (Med.), i, 104.

<sup>2</sup> Tdh, i, 91.; Tahdh, viii, 334.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, xii, 439.

they had learnt the ḥadīth from their common teacher, 'Ā'isha. While the former, after his father's death, was brought up in the guardianship of 'Ā'isha<sup>1</sup>, finding thereby a great opportunity to be benefitted by her knowledge of ḥadīth, the latter, motivated by her own love for sunna, had associated herself with 'Ā'isha and acquired so much knowledge from the latter that she came to be known as the best authority on the traditions transmitted by 'Ā'isha.<sup>2</sup> Qāsim, too, was considered as the best authority on 'Ā'isha's ahādīth.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, since 'Amra was a near relative of Abū Bakr - being his maternal<sup>4</sup> aunt<sup>5</sup> - she was easily approachable for the purpose of recording her traditions.

So far as Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm is concerned, he also was a great scholar of Medina.<sup>6</sup> 'Umar II had personal contacts with him long before his accession to the caliphate. He had met him and had doctrinal discussions with him earlier. Thus after becoming the caliph, he chose this talented scholar and capable judge to record for him the sunna and ḥadīth current in Medina.

As regards the outcome of this commission, we have seen that the task assigned to Abū Bakr was accomplished<sup>7</sup>, but before he could despatch the books prepared by him, the caliph died.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, viii, 334.; Tdh, i, 91.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, viii, 334.; xii, 439.; Asmā', I, ii, 55.

<sup>3</sup> Tahdh, viii, 334.; Asmā', I, ii, 55.

<sup>4</sup> Abbott erroneously calls her the 'paternal' aunt of Abū Bakr. (cf. Papyri, ii, 29.)

<sup>5</sup> Tahdh, xii, 38.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, xii, 39.

<sup>7</sup> Hawālik, i, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Hawālik, i, 4.

Unfortunately, the collection of Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm could not survive long. In 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad's words "they were lost (dā'at)".<sup>1</sup> This last sentence of Abū Bakr's son clearly indicates that the task of collecting the traditions was accomplished, though the 'kutub'<sup>2</sup> (containing the traditions) could not be despatched to the caliph.

(52) Thābit al-Bunānī (d. 120/123/128 A.H.):-

Thābit al-Bunānī was a serious minded student of ḥadīth, who had accompanied his teacher Anas b. Mālik for forty long years.<sup>3</sup> Some of the traditions which he narrates from Anas have found place in the Saḥīḥayn and other major ḥadīth collections.<sup>4</sup>

He was in favour of writing down the ḥadīth and used to hold regular sessions for its teaching. In one of these sessions he is said to have related ninety aḥādīth.<sup>5</sup> Ja'far b. Sulaymān is reported to have written down few aḥādīth from him.<sup>6</sup> Ḥammād b. Salama b. Dīnār had also transmitted from him a collection of 250 traditions.<sup>7</sup>

He died at an advanced age of 86, which explains his long association with Anas b. Mālik (d. 91 A.H.).

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, xii, 39.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, xii, 39.

<sup>3</sup> Mashāḥīr, 89, no. 650.; Hilya, ii, 327.

<sup>4</sup> Hilya, ii, 329-331.; Musnad, i, 295-296.; Musnad (T), 270-274.

<sup>5</sup> Hilya, vii, 313.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, ii, 96.

<sup>7</sup> Hilya, vii, 313..

(53) Jawwāb b. 'Ubayd Allāh (d. 122 A.H.)::-

The Kufan Jawwāb was a leading traditionist of Jurjān, where he had settled down.<sup>1</sup> Among his eminent transmitters were Abū Ḥanīfa, Shaybānī and Miṣ'ar.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that he used to dictate traditions to his students. Sufyān ath-Thawrī is reported to have written down few ahādīth from his transmitted material but did not read them out to him.<sup>3</sup>

(54) Zayd b. 'Alī (d. 122 A.H.)::-

Zayd b. 'Alī, the Zaydite imām, is said to have collected the traditions in a book known as Al-Majmū' fi 'l-ḥadīth.<sup>4</sup> It contains chapters on Siyar or International law.<sup>5</sup> It has been transmitted by 'Amr b. Khālid al-Qarashī.<sup>6</sup>

The manuscript of this book was seen and consulted by Dr. Ḥamidullah in 1946 at Ṣan'ā' in Yemen. He seems to consider it authentic and, therefore, remarks, "The first written, extant, collection of Hadith dates not from Bukhari or even the Imam Malik but Hammam, if we exclude the al-Majmū' fi 'l-Ḥadīth of Zaid ibn 'Alī."<sup>7</sup>

Burgstrasser has, however, doubted its authenticity.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mashāhīr, 199, no. 1597.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, ii, 121.; Mashāhīr, 199, no. 1597.

<sup>3</sup> Jarḥ(Intr.), 80-81.; Jarḥ, I, i, 536.; Mīzān, i, 426, no. 1589.

<sup>4</sup> Also mentioned as 'nuskha'. cf. Tahdh, viii, 26.

<sup>5</sup> Conduct, 25-26.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, viii, 26.

<sup>7</sup> Ḥamidullah, "Early History of the Compilation of the Hadith", The Islamic Review, May, 1949, pp. 24-25.

<sup>8</sup> U.I.J., 262. "

(55) Simāk b. al-Walīd (d. c 123 A.H.):-

Simāk b. al-Walīd al-Ḥanafī, Abū Zūmayl, was a leading traditionist of Yemen. He transmitted the traditions from Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, 'Urwa b. az-Zubayr and others.<sup>1</sup> Scholars unanimously agree on his trustworthiness.<sup>2</sup>

When he visited Basra and related the traditions there, many Iraqians wrote down from him.<sup>3</sup>

(56) Muḥammad b. Ziyād al-Qurashī (d. c 124 A.H.):-

He was a distinguished ḥadīth scholar of Medina, who had transmitted the traditions from 'Ā'isha, Abū Hurayr, Ibn 'Umar, 'Abd Allāh b. az-Zubayr and others.<sup>4</sup>

He was in favour of writing down of the ḥadīth. A collection of his transmitted ahādīth (nuskha) was in possession of one of his pupils, named Ibrāhīm b. Ṭahmān.<sup>5</sup>

(57) Ibrāhīm b. Muslim al-Majarī (d. c 125 A.H.):-

He transmitted the traditions from 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Awfā, Abū 'l-Aḥwaṣ and others.<sup>6</sup> He possessed several ḥadīth collections which were seen by Ibn 'Uyayna when the latter visited the former.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tahdh, iv, 235.

<sup>2</sup> Tahdh, iv, 235-236.

<sup>3</sup> Mashāhīr, 123, no. 962.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, ix, 169.

<sup>5</sup> Ma'rifat, 164.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, i, 164.

<sup>7</sup> Tahdh, i, 165-166.; Līzān, i, 66, no. 216.



It appears from Ibn 'Uyayna's account of these collections that Ibrāhīm used to record the traditions of each narrator in separate volumes.

(58) Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb (d. 128 A.H.):—

The Egyptian ḥadīth scholar, Yazīd had received few traditions in written form from Zuhri<sup>1</sup> and 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ.<sup>2</sup> A sizeable collection of his written ahādīth was in circulation along with the manuscripts of other scholars of the day.<sup>3</sup> Among his own students, Al-Layth b. Sa'd had made written collection of ahādīth from him.<sup>4</sup>

It is said that his wide reputation had attracted the famous Ibn Ishāq to Egypt.<sup>5</sup>

(59) Ya'lā b. Ḥakīm (d. before 130 A.H.):—

Ya'lā transmitted the traditions from Sa'id b. Jubayr, 'Ikrima, Sulaymān b. Yasār, and others. From him transmitted Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr, Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba, Ayyūb as-Sikhtiyānī and others.<sup>6</sup>

The last mentioned scholar (Ayyūb) was his friend, to whom he sent some ahādīth in written form.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> SE, iii, 478 (Ṭalāq).; Tahdh, ix, 447.

<sup>2</sup> SE, ii, 43 ('Buyū').; iii, 240 (Tafsīr al-Qur'ān).

<sup>3</sup> Papyri, ii, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Tahdh, iii, 110.; Mizān, i, 636, no. 2447, where the collection has been described as 'nuskha'.

<sup>5</sup> Jarḥ, IV, ii, 267.

<sup>6</sup> Tahdh, xi, 401.

<sup>7</sup> SE, iii, 21 ('Buyū').

(60) Abū 'z-Zinād (d. 130 A.H.):-

'Abd Allāh b. Dhakwān Abū 'z-Zinād, a leading traditionist and jurist of Medina<sup>1</sup>, was acknowledged as 'amīr al-mu'minīn fī 'l-ḥadīth'<sup>2</sup> (the leader of muslims in the field of ḥadīth). Although he remained attached to the Umayyad court in various administrative capacities,<sup>3</sup> yet his academic interest remained unaffected.

He used to hold ḥadīth sessions which were attended by a huge crowd. The number of audiences in these sessions sometimes reached three hundred.<sup>4</sup> He was mainly interested in legal ahādīth. Thus, unlike Zuhri, who used to record every type of tradition, he collected only those ahādīth which dealt with legal matters (al-ḥalāl wa'l-ḥarām).<sup>5</sup>

As he used to transmit the traditions chiefly from A'raj (d. 117 A.H.), he was known as his secretary and transmitter (kātib wa rāwī 'l-A'raj).<sup>6</sup> His own traditions were transmitted by Abū 'l-Yamān al-Ḥakam b. Nāfi, who is said to have possessed a large collection in written form.<sup>7</sup>

He is credited with a kitāb containing the traditions narrated by A'raj.<sup>8</sup> It was transmitted by his son 'Abd ar-Rahmān (d. 174 A.H.).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 233.

<sup>2</sup> Asmā', I, ii, 233.

<sup>3</sup> Bayān, i, 73, 76.

<sup>4</sup> Papyri, ii, 48, n. 136.

<sup>5</sup> Bayān, i, 73.

<sup>6</sup> Tdh, i, 127.; Tahdh, v, 203.; Papyri, ii, 139.

<sup>7</sup> Kifāya, 321.

<sup>8</sup> Imlā', 173.; Tahdh, vi, 172.; Bagh, x, 230.; Mashāhīr, 135, no. 1062.

<sup>9</sup> Tahdh, vi, 172.; Bagh, x, 230.; Imlā', 173.; Fāsil, 77b.

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